THE CONTEXT OF TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM: A CASE STUDY OF TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF PROFESSIONALISM AT THE UNIVERSITY LABORATORY SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

The nature of teacher professionalism has been both widely discussed and heavily contested over the last few decades. The systemic educational reform that has overtaken America's schools has entrenched public education in bureaucratic structures, emphasized standards, assessment, and accountability, and consequently redefined the nature of teacher professionalism. Problems of practice and curriculum have been replaced with problems of data and measurements for success. Coinciding with the accountability movement is the emergence of charter schools from the starkly different contexts of both neoliberal ideology and progressive education. Despite the substantive discourse on teacher professionalism, limited research has been done with regard to teachers' perceptions of professionalism, particularly research in the form of qualitative studies attending to this topic. This paper will describe the findings of a qualitative case study exploring the phenomenon of teacher professionalism as it emerges within a charter school context. Drawing from both survey and interview data collected from teachers at the charter school, this study presents three major findings. First, the teachers in the case study describe professionalism as going beyond "doing one's job." Second, teacher decision making with regard to matters of curriculum and instruction occur entirely in relation to the best interest of the students. Third, leadership orientation and trust contribute to teachers' sense of professionalism, as well as their ability to enact their conceptions of professionalism. These findings, coupled with the literature suggest that there are multiple contexts in which professionalism is situated, and through which educational reform targeting teacher professionalism must be filtered. Finally, this paper will describe implications and raise additional questions based on the findings, for teacher education programs, teachers' unions, professional development, and education reform.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Professionalism is a term familiar to nearly all places of work. Employees are often told to act professionally, or are evaluated on professionalism, and in some fields we refer to individuals as professional, such as professional athlete. Yet, despite its common usage, professionalism is a term that seems to have no concrete or authoritative definition (Hart & Marshall, 1992; Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996). In fact, not surprisingly, professionalism appears to mean something different to different people in various contexts over time. This multifaceted nature of teacher professionalism has proved to be problematic within the education arena and over the last three decades has served as a battleground in teaching.

Over the course of the last few decades, teacher professionalism has been heatedly contested, and undergone dramatic changes in many developed nations around the world (Baggini, 2005; Hargreaves, 2000; Day, 2002). In the United States there have been continual reform efforts to address questions of teacher quality, curriculum, and student achievement. To do so, recent educational reforms have utilized measures of increased accountability and the development of academic standards for quality and excellence in both teaching and student learning. Hart and Marshall (1992) attribute the shift toward greater teacher accountability to the loss of public trust in teachers to adequately and successfully do their job. Following an era of increased teacher activism in the U.S. during the 1960s, which led to many teacher strikes, the public trust of teachers began to wane and continued to do so in the following decades (Hart and Marshall, 1992). Public distrust remained high and concerns over education were brought to the forefront in 1983, after the release of the *A Nation at Risk* report, which made claims of America's schools falling behind competitor nations. Consequently, over time the locus of

control in education has shifted away from individual schools and districts and has been reorganized such that policies regarding teacher qualifications, curriculum, and assessment are managed more centrally by the state through financial inducements from the federal government. This has produced a system of rewards and punishments; those schools, districts, and states are rewarded for compliance with federal inducements and those who do not comply, or do not meet the set standards, risk loss of funding, or are labeled as failing (Day, 2002). In summary, the message is for schools to continuously improve according to a prescriptive set of regulations and measures for success, or risk loss of funding and ultimately having to shut down (Day, 2002).

Day (2002) argues that many of these educational reforms that were put in place not only increased the workload of teachers, but also paid little attention to teachers' professional identities, which he argues is key to motivation, job satisfaction, and effectiveness in teaching. Day (2002) goes on to argue that as a result of these strict accountability reforms, the definition of teacher professionalism has been challenged and changed. Teachers are still met with the expectation of professionalism, however, teacher professionalism in this context positions teachers as laborers, rather than artists in their craft. This new conception of teacher professionalism emphasizes efficiency and effectiveness, which are then evaluated on the basis of standardized norms and expectations for students and teachers (Day, 2002). In a text analysis of reform documents from both the United States and the Republic of Korea, Yeom and Ginsburg (2007) looked specifically at the ways in which teacher professionalism was discussed. One of the reform documents analyzed from the United States was No Child Left Behind (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2001). The authors found that while both countries place emphasis on professionalism of teachers, South Korea focused on increased teacher autonomy as a means to enhance teacher professionalism, whereas teacher autonomy was not mentioned in any of the

reform documents from the United States. Instead of seeking measures for increasing teacher professionalism through greater autonomy for teachers, United States' reform efforts focused on increasing teacher quality and professionalism through means of high-stakes accountability and transparency, primarily through measuring student achievement on high-stakes assessments. Thus, resulting in a new conceptualization of teacher professionalism where previous problems of curriculum and pedagogy are now seen as management problems that can be solved with data and reporting (Hoyle & Wallace, 2009).

In 2008, Brint and Teele reported on a study of teacher perceptions of NCLB and how teachers felt it has affected their practice. The majority (80%) of teachers in their large-scale study reported dissatisfaction with NCLB. Teachers reported focusing their instruction on the core subjects, or tested subjects, having to teach to the state assessments, less creativity and, more scripted instruction. Thirty percent of the teachers surveyed felt teaching was on the path to becoming a less skilled occupation as a result of NCLB. Overall, the authors found that amongst the teachers surveyed there is an overarching sense that teacher professionalism is under attack. This is primarily attributed to the diminishing role of teacher autonomy, particularly in the areas of curriculum, pacing, and instructional methods for teaching (Brint & Teele, 2008).

In addition to the work of Brint and Teele (2008), a number of other studies (Nichols & Berliner, 2005; Valli & Buese, 2007) have been conducted pertaining to the impacts of No Child Left Behind on both the practice of teaching and teachers themselves. Many of those effects (loss of creativity, lack of autonomy, etc.) relate directly to teacher professionalism. In her study of teacher professionalism in the era of high-stakes accountability, La Victoria (2015) found that teacher professionalism manifests differently depending on the school context. Teachers are in constant negotiation between what is happening within the macro-level discourse of education

and the localized school context. Any attempts to change teacher professionalism using a top-down approach neglect the notion that policies manifest differently within each school context (La Victoria, 2015). Therefore, it is necessary to not only better understand teachers' conceptualizations of professionalism, but also understand teachers' perceptions of professionalism within specific school contexts. This is consistent with the work of Evans (2008, 2011), in which she argues that the only meaningful conception of professionalism is the one that is enacted by the professional.

Although, according to Evans (2008, 2011), the only meaningful conceptions of professionalism are those that are enacted by the teachers; without a clear conception of the nature and substance of professionalism the term is defined and redefined according to those in power and is articulated down from the top through educational policy, teachers' unions, and universities, as well as educational organizations and other key stakeholders. However, for any large-scale reform pertaining to the nature of teachers' work and their professionalism to be successful, Fullan (2007) emphasizes the need for shared meaning amongst all stakeholders. "We have seen that there is a deep reciprocity between personal and social meaning. One contributes to the other; each is weakened in the absence of the other. The ultimate goal of change is for people to see themselves as shareholders with a stake in the success of the system as a whole, with the pursuit of meaning as the elusive key" (Fullan, 2007, p.303). Studies (Nichols & Berliner, 2005; Valli & Buese, 2007) conducted following the passage of NCLB found that teachers were more stressed and frustrated. Teachers felt they were unable to meet the demands of the new policies, such as preparing students for high-stakes standardized tests, while at the same time attending to the needs and best interests of their students. This contradiction between what teachers have to do and teachers believe they should be doing for their students not only

contributes to a decrease in teacher morale, but limits the overall effectiveness of the educational reforms. This juxtaposition creates a paradox in teacher professionalism, leaving the substance of professionalism at a crossroads. Teachers are often viewed at fault for the failure of reform initiatives, as opposed to the consideration that for meaningful, large-scale reform, teachers must find meaning in the proposed reforms (Fullan, 2007). Additionally, Fullan (2007) writes about the "Neglect of the phenomenology of change – that is, how people actually experience change as distinct from how it might have been intended" (Fullan, 2007, p.8). Therefore, if the goal of educational reform is initiate change with regard to the meaning and practice of teaching, one must consider how that change will be experienced by those who are implementing the change. Specifically, one must consider how teachers will experience the changes in relation to their perceptions of professionalism.

Research Objective

Much of the recent research focused on teacher professionalism is situated within the traditional public school context, and pertains particularly to the impacts of NCLB on the nature of teachers' work, or aspects of teacher professionalism. Although this research is important for understanding teacher professionalism within that context, this study seeks to better understand teacher perceptions of professionalism within a public-charter school context. As "schools of choice," public charter schools are granted a greater autonomy and flexibility in decision making in exchange for outcomes-based accountability according to a charter school contract with the state charter school commission. With greater freedom from centralized, bureaucratic control, charter schools are in a position to give more autonomy back to the teachers, an aspect of teaching that, as mentioned, seems to have diminished, or has been altogether eliminated in the era of accountability. As such, understanding the phenomenon of teacher professionalism in a

more autonomous environment will reveal insights about teachers' perceptions and sense of professionalism that emerge from a public-charter school context, and which may serve as a model for traditional public schools in any attempt to enhance teacher professionalism. Using the key characteristics of a profession as described by the literature (Brint, 1994; David, 2000; Hart & Marshall, 1992; Helterbran, 2008; Sachs, 2003; Sockett, 1993) as the conceptual framework, and as will be further described in Chapter 2, this study seeks to describe and analyze the nature of teachers' perceptions of professionalism at the University Laboratory School, a public charter school in Hawai′i. The following research questions were used to guide the study:

1. How is the nature of teacher professionalism articulated by teachers within a public charter school context?
2. How is teacher professionalism embedded within the contexts that surround the professional lives of teachers?

Dissertation Overview

Following this introductory chapter is a discussion of the concept of professionalism as articulated in the literature. Over the last few decades, there have been numerous studies and discourse in the literature on teacher professionalism, largely in response to the aforementioned educational reform movement focused on standardization and teacher accountability. Although in the literature we find that there is no authoritative definition of professionalism, there are numerous in-depth discussions over the nature of professionalism. While much of the consensus on the nature of professionalism describes professionalism as being both socially constructed and externally imposed, others argue that professionalism is entirely based on the capacity of the individual teacher. The nature and substance of professionalism may ultimately rest with the individual teacher; however, external factors from the macro-level discourse on teacher

professionalism also interact with teacher perceptions of professionalism. Evans (2008, 2011) argues that the only meaningful interpretation of professionalism is one that is enacted by the teachers. While this paper adopts Evans' (2008) concept of enacted professionalism, professionalism is not enacted without context. It is these contextual factors, including both what Evans' terms demanded and prescribed for professionalism, that interact with teachers' enacted professionalism. The interaction between demanded and enacted professionalism often results in a paradoxical environment for teachers. Therefore, it is important for research to be aimed at better understanding teachers' perceptions of professionalism at the school level, amidst the macro-level discourse on professionalism centered primarily on teacher accountability. Following the review of the literature on professionalism is a discussion of the conceptual framework used for this study. The conceptual framework for professionalism draws from the work of numerous authors (Brint, 1994; David, 2000; Hart & Marshall, 1992; Helterbran, 2008; Sachs, 2003; Sockett, 1993) and their discussions on the core tenets of professionalism. These core tenets do not represent an official version of professionalism, rather they are widely agreed upon characteristics that must be present for an occupation to be considered a profession, and therefore serve as a reliable conceptual framework from which to better understand and interpret teacher perceptions of professionalism. It is the quality and extent of these features of professionalism that serve as the battleground for control and regulation of professionalism in teaching.

The third chapter provides the methodological approach and description of the methods used in this study. This study seeks to understand and provide rich descriptions of teachers' perceptions of professionalism. As such, this study used qualitative methods, specifically a case study approach at one K-12 public charter school. This chapter will describe the three-tiered

approach to data collection and thematic coding during the data analysis. Concerns regarding both researcher bias and validity will be discussed at the conclusion of this chapter.

The fourth chapter describes the context of the school site. The school has both a unique history and mission that has resulted in a school culture in which teacher professionalism is embedded. Although participants were never directly asked to articulate characteristics of the school in relation to their perceptions of professionalism, many, if not all of the teacher participants described how the school impacts either their perception, or sense of professionalism. Therefore, this chapter will discuss in detail the micro-level context from which the findings of this study emerged.

Chapter five provides a discussion of the findings from this study. The findings were coded and categorized according to the core aspects of professionalism articulated within the conceptual framework and are reported in that same fashion. This chapter will include a discussion of both the significance of the findings within the school site in particular, as well as the framework for professionalism.

Chapter six, the final chapter, explores the larger significance of the findings within the macro-level discourse on teacher professionalism. We are in an educational era where accountability in schools and of teachers supersedes the altruistic dimensions of teaching. The findings from ULS provides insight on how teachers perceive professionalism, and how those perceptions interact with the multiple contexts of professionalism in which the professional lives of teachers are embedded. The findings from ULS raise questions particularly for educational reform that targets teacher professionalism using a top-down approach. This last chapter will also highlight the implications and questions raised for educational reform, as well as possible

implications and critical questions for teacher education programs, teachers' unions, and the professional development of in-service teachers.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

As discussed in Chapter 1, professionalism is a term that seems to have no concrete or authoritative definition (Hart & Marshall, 1992; Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996). "A profession does not exist in the same way that a stone exists, and to define and look for a profession in the same way one would define and look for a stone will only lead to confusion and frustration" (Soder, 1990, p.44). However, Soder (1990) goes on to argue that, although an essentialist definition for profession may not exist, it does exist as a social construct. That is, a definition for profession, or professionalism is defined only as a given group at a particular time defines it. Therefore, a profession can be discussed, or speculated in terms of its social meaning (Soder, 1990). Existing literature regarding teacher professionalism is consistent with Soder's notion of the term. As such, rather than attempts at defining professionalism, the literature presents broad conceptualizations of term. Although the literature presents some consensus with regard to the nature and substance of teacher professionalism, competing notions are also presented.

Hoyle (1975, as cited in Evans, 2008) described professionalism as "…strategies and rhetoric employed by members of an occupation in seeking to improve status, salary, and conditions" (p.315). However, more recently Hoyle (2001) refers to professionalism as a term to describe improvement in quality of service. Also focusing on quality of service, Hugh Sockett (1993) in *The Moral Base for Teacher Professionalism,* describes professionalism as the "…manner of conduct within an occupation, how members integrate their obligations with their knowledge and skill in a context of collegiality, and their contractual and ethical relations with clients" (p. 9). Ozga (1995) suggests that professionalism is best understood within the social and political context and that, "Critical analyses of professionalism do not stress the qualities

inherent in an occupation, but explore the value of service offered by those members of the occupation to those in power" (p. 22). According to Ozga (1995), professionalism is best interpreted as ideological construct, which is localized in its conception, and constantly changing within that local context according to particular interests. Therefore, the concept of professionalism presents ongoing struggle as the meaning shifts within the different contexts and traditions from which the concept emerges.

In their study, Solbrekke & Englund (2011) analyzed the meaning of professional responsibility in the current climate of accountability. On a general level, they describe professional responsibility as a concept that implies the responsibility of the professional to both individuals and the public interest. However, they argue that in a real world context, professional responsibility takes on different meanings depending on who is defining it. In the contemporary contexts, the varying interests of key stakeholders define professional responsibility. This lack of consensus on the meaning of professional responsibility results in disagreements between those in positions of higher power decision-making, such as the government, and individual teachers (Solbrekke & Englund, 2011). With the increasing emphasis on accountability, teachers and schools are required to justify their actions to the public. As such, schools and teachers feel pressure to adopt the suggested "best practice" from those who are holding them accountable. Yet, the methods employed by the terms of accountability often neglect the complexities within professional responsibility and place greater emphasis on transparency in professional practice (Solbrekke & Englund, 2011). However, the result defines professionalism in terms of efficiency and performativity and neglects the altruistic dimensions of teaching.

As we observe from the literature described above, professionalism is commonly described as being external, or socially imposed. In her analysis of the broad consensus amongst

academics on teacher professionalism, Evans (2008) also finds the consensus as being an interpretation that focuses on the external control or imposition of professionalism particularly by agencies outside the profession. That is, the nature of teacher professionalism is external, or socially imposed. However, other authors (Evans, 2008; Helsby, 1995) interpret professionalism as being internal. That is, professionalism is influenced by the capacity of the individual. Helsby (1995) argues that, "…teachers are potentially key players in that (social) construction, accepting or resisting external control and asserting or denying their autonomy" (p. 320). This interpretation implies the importance of understanding teacher perceptions of professionalism and its relation to and within education reform, particularly reform that utilizes a more top-down, bureaucratic approach to change. I will return to the idea of the internal nature of professionalism later on in this chapter.

Discourse on professionalism, specifically teacher professionalism, has emerged from, or has been largely in response to political agendas and government-initiated reform that places greater control and accountability over the quality and nature of the teaching profession. Government changes to the nature and quality of the profession have been interpreted as a direct attack on teacher professionalism (Hargreaves & Goodson, 2003; Day, 2002). In response, a discourse has emerged on what is being referred to as *new professionalism, postmodern professionalism, or principled professionalism* (Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996; Sachs, 2003; Hoyle & Wallace, 2009).

Hargreaves and Goodson (2003) begin with a distinction between professionalism - teachers' definition of occupational practices and approaches to "...pursuing the art and craft of teaching" (p. 126) and "professionalization" - a pursuit of professional status and resources. Although some (Hoyle, 1975; Soder, 1990) might argue that professionalism is the status and

prestige associated with the profession, most distinguish the process of improvement in status or prestige of professionalization as being different from professionalism and which often pertains to the quality and nature of the profession. Hargreaves and Goodson (2003) argue that professionalism and professionalization are not always a harmonious effort. Currently, there is a strong sense of opposition towards the professionalization of teachers, yet, as mentioned previously, paradoxically the rhetoric of educational reform is centered on enhancing teacher professionalism. Hargreaves and Goodson (2003) argue that this "...opposition to teacher professionalization are undoubtedly ideological, but behind ideological antipathy are a range of financial changes which sponsor notions of retrenchment and cutback" (p. 126). However, despite this de-professionalization of teaching, teachers are simultaneously held to expectations of professionalism.

Teacher professionalism is being increasingly driven by government guidelines and central edicts on issues ranging from assessment to accountability to curriculum definition. In the process it would seem that teaching is being technicized, but not professionalized. In fact, such standardization is undermining traditional conceptions of professionalism and replacing them with notions of the teacher as the technical deliverer of guidelines and schemes devised elsewhere (Hargreaves & Goodson, 2003, p. 127). However, even if these standards for professional teaching are targeted at hindering professionalization, they open up conversations and opportunities for enhancing the quality of teacher professionalism (Hargreaves & Goodson, 2003). It is this window of opportunity regarding professional standards for practice where Hargreaves and Goodson (2003) see the opportunity for the development of what they call "principled professionalism." According to Hargreaves and Goodson (2003), principled professionalism is guided by moral and ethical dimensions of teaching and education and

includes seven components: 1) expectations of engagement with the moral and social purposes and values of what teachers teach, 2) increased opportunity for autonomous judgement concerning matters of teaching, 3) commitment to collaborative cultures in the sharing of ideas and problem-solving within the profession, 4) occupational heteronomy where teachers work autonomously, yet openly and collaboratively, 5) active care of students that embraces emotional dimensions of teaching, 6) struggle for continuous learning and improvement in practice, and 7) the recognition of "high-task complexity." Principled professionalism differs from what Hargreaves and Goodson (2003) refer to as "classical professionalism" and "practical professionalism". Classical professionalism focuses on principles of teaching that are guided by academic research and scientific inquiry (Hargreaves & Goodson, 2003). In this form of professionalism, teachers are trained in expertise acquired from the academic and political realms. This form restricts the autonomy of teachers, and rewards those who follow the guidelines and reforms. Practical professionalism moves away from the "academicization" of classical professionalism, and places greater emphasis on teachers' practical knowledge (Hargreaves & Goodson, 2003). At the core of practical professionalism are reflective teaching practices and the ability to use experience and judgement in the expected and unexpected scenarios of everyday teaching. While classical professionalism endangers teacher autonomy and eliminates the art and craft of teaching (Eisner, 1983), practical professionalism also has its pitfalls. Practical professionalism in its extreme gives way for teacher experiences that may not be worthwhile, or directs their work out of alignment with its social and moral commitments (Hargreaves and Goodson, 2003; Hargreaves, 2000).

In a similar vein, Sachs (2003) developed two classifications for teacher professionalism, which she describes as "old professionalism" and "new professionalism". According to Sachs

(2003), these old and new versions of professionalism have emerged as a result of social, political, economic and cultural conditions. Because of their ideologically contradictory nature and uses, despite some overlap, Sachs (2003) seeks to distinguish between what characterizes old professionalism and what she calls the new or "transformative" professionalism. Old professionalism refers to "…old forms of teacher professionalism (that) draw on professional and professionalization in order to argue the case of teaching as a profession" (Sachs, 2003, p. 7). With regard to transformative professionalism, Sachs adopts Hargreaves (2000) notion of professionalism "…as more positive and principled postmodern ways that are flexible, wide-ranging and inclusive in nature," (p. 153) but also still takes into account previously held scholarly and public debates over teacher professionalism. Within the transformative professionalism emerges the *activist teaching profession* (Sachs, 2003), which maintains the expertise, altruism, and autonomy conceptions of a professional, but additionally focus on the group over the individual. That is, "…its fundamental purpose is political. It brings together alliances and networks of various educational interest groups for collective action to improve *all* aspects of the educational enterprise at the macro level of student learning outcomes and teacher status in the eyes of the community at the micro level" (p. 138). In *new professionalism*, proactivity and agency on the part of the teacher is critical in the definition of the nature and purpose of their work; teachers place priority on the needs and interests of students and families over policy mandates that seem to counter those needs and interests. Hoyle & Wallace (2009) term this idea as *principled infidelity.*

In response to this emerging discourse, Evans (2008) depicts a more nuanced interpretation of teacher professionalism which is presented in her development of a theoretical model for professionalism. Evans (2008) notes that much of the consensus on the substance of

teacher professionalism focuses on homogeneity in values and viewpoints amongst members. Evans (2008) argues that this homogeneity, or ideological consensus is the underpinning of a professional culture. Evans (2008) suggests a relationship between professional culture and professionalism, in that "professional culture may be interpreted as the collective, predominately attitudinal, response of people towards professionalism that predominately defines how they function" (Evans, 2008, p. 25). However, in addition to the collective notion of professionalism, Evans (2008) suggests a singular unit of professionalism contained in the individuality of the individual within the teaching profession, referred to as *professionality.* More formally, Evans (2008) describes professionality as "…an ideologically-, attitudinally-, intellectually-, and epistemologically-based stance on the part of the individual, in relation to the practice of the profession to which s/he belongs, and which influences her/his professional practice" (p. 26). The term "professionality" is adopted from the work of Hoyle (1975) in which Hoyle developed two models for professionalism: *restricted* and *extended.* These models were developed around the notion that professionality can be seen as a continuum. At one end, a *restricted professional* is one who is "…essentially reliant upon experience and intuition and is guided by a narrow, classroom-based perspective" (Evans, 2008, p. 26) and on the other end *extended professionalism* reflects "…a much wider vision of what education involves, valuing the theory underpinning pedagogy, and the adoption of a generally intellectual and rationally-based approach" (Evans, 2008, p. 26). Location on the continuum is referred to as *professionality orientation.* According to Evans (2008), professionalism is the plural, or collective of individuals' professionality orientation. Evans' (2008) interpretation of professionalism has two major implications for the substance of professionalism: 1) the nature and purpose of teacher professionalism is determined within the profession, and 2) if professionalism is interpreted as a

range of professionalities, then within professionalism there exists such diversity that an ideological consensus is ambiguous and only exists in a prescribed and demanded conception of professionalism. If the nature and purpose of teacher professionalism is determined within the profession, then Evans (2008, 2011) argues that in order for professionalism to be real it has to be something that those within the profession "do" or believe, not simply be implied by something that those within the profession are demanded or prescribed to do or believe. Evans (2008) concludes that "…any attempt to impose a professionalism on an occupation group or community must, therefore, incorporate both consideration of the influence, and understanding of the nature, of that group's professional culture(s), as represented by the professionality range with the profession" (p. 27-28). The only meaningful conception of professionalism is the one enacted by practitioners. From this Evans (2008) conceives the nature of professionalism as "…professionality-influenced practice that is consistent with commonly-held consensual delineations of a specific profession's purpose and status and the specific nature, range and levels of service provided by, and expertise prevalent within, the profession, as well as the general ethical code underpinning this practice" (p. 29).

Although Evans (2008) argues that what she terms, "enacted" professionalism is the only real form because it reflects what teachers actually believe and do, she also describes two other existing forms of teacher professionalism, "demanded" and "prescribed". Demanded professionalism is a form of professionalism that is demanded or requested of those within the profession, and prescribed professionalism is one that is envisioned or recommended, such as by analysts or academics (Evans, 2011). Evans' (2008) conception of teacher professionalism allows professionalism in teaching to be analyzed simply by what it is, rather than what it should be, or what particular interests want it to be. Additionally, Evans' (2008) model for

professionalism provides a lens through which we can understand the relationship and interplay between enacted, demanded, and prescribed forms of professionalism, as well as discrepancies that exist across individual forms of enacted professionalism and how those differences are negotiated within a school context. Evans (2008) model for professionalism, including the three forms of professionalism can serve as a framework for interpreting and analyzing the interaction between the demanded, prescribed, and enacted professionalism, with the perceptions of teacher professionalism held by those within the delineated profession.

Although Evans (2008) theoretical model for professionalism provides a framework through which to better understand the notion of professionalism, a conceptual framework is needed to analyze teachers' perceptions of professionalism in terms of the profession itself. While the notion of professionalism is contested, the literature presents widely agreed upon characteristics that must be present for any profession to be considered as such. These characteristics, or core tenets for a profession are generally accepted as necessary to be considered a profession, but can be described differently by the literature and embraced to varying degrees.

Core Tenets of a Profession

Described below are core tenets, or characteristics of professions that historically have distinguished professions from other occupations, and have been previously used as a conceptual lens to analyze teacher perceptions of professionalism in teaching (La Victoria, 2015; Tichenor & Tichenor, 2005). While the four aspects that are listed below can be applied across all professions, they are described in terms of their nature within the teaching profession. These characteristics do not represent an official version of professionalism, rather they are widely agreed upon (Brint, 1994; David, 2000; Hart & Marshall, 1992; Helterbran, 2008; Sachs, 2003;

Sockett, 1993) characteristics that must be present for a profession to be considered as such. Therefore, these characteristics can serve as a reliable conceptual framework from which to better understand and analyze teacher perceptions of professionalism, or the dynamic between enacted professionalism and demanded professionalism. Additionally, and as will be described below, it is the quality and extent of these features of a profession that serve as the battleground for control and regulation of teacher professionalism.

Conceptual Framework for Analyzing Teacher Perceptions of Professionalism

Specialized body of knowledge. Similar to all fields of work that are considered professions, teaching requires a specialized body of knowledge. According to the work of Hart & Marshall (1992), all professions contain a specific body of knowledge that is not possessed by those outside the profession. The specialization aspect of the knowledge is critical to the profession in that without it, everyone could claim to be a professional in the field. Klegon (1978) argues that professional knowledge must present challenges in attainment, such that it warrants public respect and professionals in the field are viewed as experts. The specialized body of knowledge includes both intellectual skills, as well as manual skills. A lengthy, typically academic training is necessary for acquiring the skills and knowledge critical to the profession (Hart & Marshall, 1992). However, once the initial formal education is completed, continuing education in the form of advanced degrees, coursework, and credentials are often also obtained. Shulman (1986) argues that in addition to the content knowledge and expertise required, professional knowledge for teaching must also include pedagogical knowledge. In teaching, pedagogical knowledge, or pedagogical content knowledge is the knowledge of the best methods and practices in teaching the subject matter to students. Sockett (1993) describes this as the "hows" of teaching, which include questioning, and the delivery of the curriculum. Pedagogical

knowledge is described as complex (Shulman, 1986) and often develops through practical experience in the field and under the mentorship of experienced colleagues. Hart & Marshall (1992) argue that public trust and respect for the acquired specialized knowledge is crucial to the establishment of a profession.

Responsibility. In its traditional form, professions were considered as such because of their service and responsibility to society (Brint, 1994; Hart & Marshall, 1992; David, 2000). This idea of service speaks to the altruistic nature of professionalism and its moral basis (Soder, 1990). Professionals are trusted to put their client needs above all else, or in the case of teaching the needs of the students and their families. Teachers are to provide the best in quality education to all students. As such, professionals are expected act within an agreed upon code of ethics (David, 2000). This code of ethics serves to keep professionals acting within the set of appropriate conduct for the profession, as well as to model moral behavior to students.

Collegiate collaboration. Collegiate collaboration amongst experts in the field is two-fold in that it is regulatory and contributes to a distinctive culture. Professionals within the field are, as mentioned, considered experts and regarded highly by society for the highly specialized knowledge they have attained (David, 2000). As such, professionals within the field are also those who have the knowledge to evaluate and judge the quality and performance of others within that profession. It is the members of the profession that define and enforce standards of practice (Darling-Hammond, 1985). Often, these standards for practice are established through the development and meeting of professional associations. Hart & Marshall (1992) argue professionals exist to serve a purpose and within that purpose carry their own norms and values. It is the norms, values, and purpose that create a distinctive culture within the profession. These

norms and values are established through the development of a shared culture and common goal within the profession.

Autonomy. The specialized body of knowledge is a key feature of professionalism, and professionals are also expected to use that knowledge to make decisions related to the profession (David, 2000; Demirkasimoglu, 2010; Hart & Marshall, 1992). Teaching is a complex and unpredictable profession; therefore, teachers need the authority to make autonomous decisions in various situations. Many of the theories taught in teacher education programs are not prescriptive and are not always clear in how they manifest in practice. With professional autonomy, teachers have the freedom to explore how theories support practice and practice contributes to the development of theories. In other words, for most effective practice, teachers exercise professional judgement and make decisions based on the current needs of the students and thereby gain more experience that will contribute to better judgements over time. However, for any profession, professional autonomy is highly dependent on public trust (Hart & Marshall, 1992; Sachs, 2003). The public needs assurance that the teachers not only possess the expertise, but also know how and when to use their expertise in practice.

Demanded Professionalism: The Erosion of Teacher Professionalism

Over the course of the last two decades, teacher professionalism has become a public battleground and a means for educational control. Federal mandates that are tied to enticing financial inducements have placed teacher professionalism at the whim of educational reformists and policymakers, and those in positions of authority (Day, 2002; Troman, 1996) who demand their own visions of professionalism. The 1983 *A Nation at Risk* report declared that America's students are falling behind in achievement relative to students from other developed nations. Fears of educational mediocrity eroding our nation's success sparked an educational reform

movement, led by the federal government. A solution to the mismatch between what students can do and what American society expects them to do was sought through standards-based reform (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). Higher standards for achievement, changes in curriculum, and tighter accountability for teachers were just some of the initiatives that followed. GOALS 2000, federal reform legislation, emphasized performance and content standards to initiate change in classroom practices. The era of GOALS 2000 was coupled with new, emerging theories on learning. Differing from the traditional approach where classrooms were teacher-led and knowledge was transmitted to the students through lecture, new theories and research revealed that students learn best through constructivist classrooms that focus on higher order reasoning and abilities, as opposed to rote memorization of concepts (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). This new approach to teaching and learning was far different from how teachers had learned, and from how teachers had been taught to teach (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). Therefore, reform efforts were also directed at the professional learning of teachers. Reform initiatives during the 1990s focused on a model of "top-down support for bottom up reform" (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). Focus was placed on rebuilding teacher professionalism in light of the emerging theories on teaching and learning, coupled with the push for educational improvement in America's schools (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). Policies were put in place that emphasized capacity building of teachers and schools. Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin (1995) argued that the standards-based reform movement enhanced teacher professionalism by shifting the authority back to the teacher, through opportunities to rethink and restructure all aspects of teacher practice. However, by the end of the twentieth century reform initiatives continued to shift in the direction of greater accountability through the standardization of teaching standards and practice, and using

standardized testing of students as a means to measure teacher effectiveness, which paradoxically seems to have undermined the enhancement of teacher professionalism. In 2001, under the Bush administration No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was passed. NCLB shifted more control from the local level to the state and federal level and impacted teachers and their practice. McLaughlin (2011) contends that NCLB usurped the standards-based reform dialogue on professional growth and replaced it with teacher accountability for student achievement. McLaughlin (2011) argues that "...the contemporary climate of high-stakes accountability can create disincentives for teachers to attend to more than standardized test scores; to engage in candid, tough discussions about practice; or to try new ways of improving success of underachieving students" (p. 67). Performance on standardized assessments is often tied to public funding for schools at the state level, which results in the work of teachers at the school level being dictated by the teachers' ability to prepare students for these high-stakes, standardized assessments. The federal and state prescriptions for the work of teachers emphasized particular knowledge outlined by content and performance standards, performance data, and responsibility in ensuring improvement of student test scores year to year. These educational reform initiatives set out strict guidelines, or demands for what it means for teachers to be professionals, as well as the enforcement of strict accountability through the creation of a high-stakes testing culture. What results is a form of *demanded professionalism*, which is not always aligned with the *enacted* professionalism constructed by the individual teacher or the collective, and is often set against the moral and ethical framework for teacher professionalism. This highlights the importance of better understanding the substance and quality of enacted teacher professionalism for the successful implementation of effective education policies and reform aimed at improving teaching and learning.

Shifts in knowledge and practice. In her review of common findings from studies conducted to monitor the effects of NCLB on teachers and teaching, La Victoria (2015) describes three recurring findings that emerge from the research on professionalism: narrowing of the curriculum, test preparation, and time constraints. La Victoria (2015) describes that in a number of studies, researchers found that the school curriculum has been significantly narrowed, placing greater focus on subjects that would be tested, such as mathematics and language arts. Many studies also found that enrichment activities such as visual and performing arts had been significantly decreased to accommodate time for the testing subjects. La Victoria (2015) also reports that some studies found that schools which could be characterized as "low achieving" experienced an even more significant narrowing of the curriculum. Additionally, through the adoption of standards-based curriculum, many of the instructional activities and materials were also restricted.

With so much riding on student achievement and standardized testing, teachers, particularly in elementary schools, spent a lot of instructional time preparing students for testing. To prepare students for testing, teachers utilize instructional strategies that include prioritizing procedural over conceptual understanding, and instruction in operational test-taking skills (Nichols & Berliner, 2005). Covering all the content standards, as well as preparing students for testing places substantial time constraints on the work of teachers. Many extra-curricular activities such as extensive projects and field trips are first on the cutting block to make time for the standards-based objectives (La Victoria, 2015).

The high stakes accountability era has dramatically altered and trivialized the highly specialized knowledge required for the teaching profession. Professional problems that were once seen as problems of curriculum and pedagogy are reduced to management problems that are

solved by prescriptive procedures and quantitative data (Hoyle & Wallace, 2009). Here emerges a demanded form of professionalism where knowledge and practice center on student achievement through high-stakes testing and reporting.

Responsibility in a market economy. Brint (1994) argues that the market economy has significantly changed how professionalism is viewed. Where traditional conceptions of professionalism maintain that altruistic ideology of the profession where the needs of the client are placed above all else, in a market economy profit is prioritized above all else (Brint, 1994). The market economy ideology and its associated managerial culture have both institutionally and culturally incorporated teaching (Hoyle & Wallace, 2009). Although educational reform initiatives employ rhetoric of educational equality and excellence in education, many of the one-size-fits-all policies stemming from these initiatives place economic success and job creation over the diverse needs of the students and their families, and place teachers in situations where compliance to administration results in the neglect of the needs of students.

Strict accountability: Teaching in handcuffs. Perhaps one of the more heated issues surrounding the high-stakes accountability era is teachers' loss of freedom and autonomy over curriculum and instruction in their own classrooms. The corporate model of top-down decision making has shifted the locus of control in the classroom from the teacher to higher up administration and in some cases, external agencies. Demanded professionalism in this form is aligned with the acquiescence to authority as opposed to democratically responsive teaching (Endacott et al., 2015). In a study conducted by Endacott et al. (2015) teachers reported feeling like robots or an assembly line and unable to differentiate instruction to serve the well-being of their students.

Isolation and alienated teaching. Over the last few decades, research has found that alienation in teaching occurs when there exists a mismatch between the type of work teachers would like to do and the type of work that is demanded of them. Stone-Johnson (2016) argues that "…for some teachers, the difference between the work they are asked to do now – the standardized and narrowed work…and the kind of work they feel they are no longer allowed to do, such as in-depth units on topics of interest that fall outside the standardized curriculum, or units that are team taught or more collaborative, results in a sense of alienation" (p. 32). Alienation can result in teachers feeling powerless, or meaningless and may result in the teacher operating primarily behind closed doors, or leaving the profession altogether (Macdonald & Shirley, 2009 as cited in Stone-Johnson, 2016). Alienation also contributes to professionals operating in isolation, rather than promoting professional collaboration. Since the norms and values for the profession are dictated outside the profession, there is little need for discourse and collaboration amongst those within the profession.

Toward a New Vision of Teacher Professionalism

While the prescribed conceptions of a new, or principled professionalism as articulated by Hargreaves & Goodson (1996, 2003), Sachs (2003), and Hoyle & Wallace (2009) serves as a productive macro-discourse on the enhancement of the quality of teacher professionalism, Evans' (2008) conception of teacher professionalism is qualitatively neutral and provides a lens through which we can understand the relationship and interplay between enacted, demanded, and prescribed professionalism. It is this interplay that contributes to the success or failure of meaningful change in education. Reforms from the top are merely demanded professionalism without an understanding of enacted teacher professionalism and the interplay between the two forms. La Victoria (2015) argues that macro-level decision-making alone cannot determine the

nature of teacher professionalism because context plays a significant role in its manifestation. While macro-level decision-making can impact professionalism through constraining teachers' abilities to act according to their conceptions of professionalism, the nature of professionalism is best understood at the school site level (La Victoria, 2015). In order to affect productive and meaningful change or growth in teacher professionalism, it is imperative to first understand the qualities and nature of enacted professionalism, or what characteristics teachers themselves believe embodies teacher professionalism.

While there are many descriptions on the nature of professionalism in the literature, there are few studies that have been conducted that focus specifically on teacher conceptions of professionalism, and even fewer qualitative studies that explore how teachers think about and perceive teacher professionalism. In their study, Tichenor & Tichenor (2005) explored teacher perceptions of professionalism at four elementary schools using focus group interviews as the primary means of data collection. The four schools were Professional Development Schools (PDS), meaning that they work collaboratively with university teacher education programs. Tichenor & Tichenor (2005) found that teachers' responses could be coded and categorized according to Sockett's (1993) five categories of professionalism, not too dissimilar to the four categories that serve as the conceptual framework for this study: 1) character, 2) commitment to change and continuous improvement, 3) subject knowledge, 4) pedagogical knowledge, and 5) obligations and working relationships beyond the classroom. Tichenor & Tichenor (2005) found that in general teachers hold high-standards of teaching for themselves and others, teachers emphasize the character component in professionalism above the others, and lastly, teachers uphold the importance of communicating the meaning of teacher professionalism to a broader audience.

The findings from this study will add to the limited qualitative studies surrounding teachers' perceptions of professionalism and will contribute to communicating the nature and substance of teacher professionalism to a broader audience. Understanding teacher professionalism is not only critical for education reform and meaningful change, but sheds light on the substance of professionalism and how it functions within the contexts that surround the professionalism lives of teachers.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

After analyzing the existing literature pertaining to teacher professionalism, the need for research exploring teachers' perceptions of professionalism, or enacted professionalism was apparent. Understanding teacher perceptions of professionalism provides insight not only on the nature of substance of professionalism, but also how professionalism functions and how to influence it (Evans, 2008).

Study Design

Given the importance of in-depth and rich descriptions from the teachers in an attempt to conceptualize teachers' enacted professionalism within a particular school setting, or bounded unit of analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), a qualitative case-study approach (Yin, 1994) was used. Consistent with Yin's (2014) definition of a case study, this study seeks to investigate the phenomenon of teacher professionalism as situated within the real-life context of a particular school. As such, a qualitative case-study approach is appropriate for this study.

Site Selection

A qualitative case study was conducted focusing on teachers' perceptions of teacher professionalism using a conceptual lens of professionalism as articulated in Chapter 2. The study was conducted at a K-12 public charter school in Honolulu, Hawai′i. During the time of the data collection, I was employed as a teacher at the school site. Existing studies pertaining to teacher conceptualizations of professionalism (La Victoria, 2015) look specifically at public schools and the role of high-stakes testing and reform on teachers' perceptions of professionalism. For this study, a public charter school was selected with the goal of exploring teacher perceptions of

professionalism in a setting that is still subject to accountability measures, but is given greater autonomy to accomplish state-mandated goals.

Participants

Participants were recruited and selected based solely on the requirement that they were current teachers of record at the school site. This selection was purposeful in that it allows for maximum variation in the data (Maxwell 2013, Miles & Huberman, 1994). The maximum variation in the data allowed for the inclusion of a variety of experiences in teaching and allowed for the identification of common patterns and trends among a subset of the participants (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This avoided the possibility of key informant bias (Maxwell, 2013). Of the twenty-three teachers who agreed to participate in the study, twenty participated in the entirety of the study. Of the twenty participating participants, fifteen were female and five were male. Twenty percent of the teachers had been teaching in the 3-5 years range, another twenty percent had been teaching in the 6-10 years range, and the remaining sixty percent had been teaching more than ten years. Fifteen percent of the teachers had been at the school site for 1-2 years, thirty percent had been at the school 3-5 years, twenty-five percent had been at the school site for 6-10 years, and thirty percent had been at the school site for more than ten years. Of the twenty participating teachers, twenty-five percent were elementary teachers, eighty-five percent were middle school teachers, and ninety-five percent were high school teachers. It was not uncommon at the school site for one teacher to teach multiple grade levels. Participants spanned across all disciplines of mathematics, science, visual and performing arts, physical education, English, elementary, diverse learner needs, elective courses, and college and career.

Data Collection

The nature of this study pertained to teacher perceptions of teacher professionalism at a single school site. That is, exploring the terms, ideas, and experiences teachers at ULS draw from when discussing teacher professionalism. As such, the primary mode of data collection was a survey, interviews, and focus group interviews. For this study, I utilized a three-tiered approach to the data collection. In the first tier, all participants were sent an online survey asking questions related to teachers' descriptions and perceptions of professionalism, the factors that they felt contributed to their ideas of professionalism, whether or not they thought their perceptions are shared by other teachers at the school site, if their conceptions of professionalism have changed over time, and questions pertaining to years of teaching experience and subjects taught. Additionally, participants were asked to describe something they have done, or do on a daily basis that embodies professionalism. This question provided insight into how the participants do, or enact what they describe as professionalism. The survey is attached in appendix A. The survey was given out in March 2016, about two months prior to the end of the school year. The purpose of the initial survey was two-fold. First, the survey provided an initial opportunity for the participants to reflect and write about their perceptions of teacher professionalism, its relation to various contexts, and how the participant enacts their conceptions of professionalism. Secondly, the survey provided me with an initial baseline of teacher conceptions of professionalism and allowed for initial analysis and coding to occur. The findings from the first phase of analysis contributed to the development of personalized follow up questions for the semi-structured interviews, and focus group interviews. Although the follow up interviews were conducted using a set of predetermined questions as a baseline (as described below), questions were primarily written specifically for individual teachers based on their individual survey responses. This

afforded me the opportunity to dig deeper into teacher responses and ask clarification questions to validate some the initial findings from the survey.

Following the initial survey, seven teachers (35% of the total number of participants) were interviewed individually to further elaborate on their descriptions of teacher professionalism. The time of the school year was busy for many of the teachers (just following spring break), therefore only eleven (55%) of the twenty teachers surveyed agreed to participate in either the individual interview and/or the focus group interview. The interview questions for the individual interview were based on the initial survey questions, but were tailored to each participants' responses on the survey. The interview questions asked the participants for further elaboration, or clarification of responses. Additionally, new follow up questions were asked based on new details or descriptions the participant shared during the interview. All of the teachers interviewed provided more nuanced responses in the face-to-face interview. Teachers cited more specific examples of enacted professionalism, as well as richer descriptions of the terms they used to describe teacher professionalism.

For the final tier of data collection, I conducted two focus group interviews each in which three teachers participated. A similar semi-structured interview protocol was used as in the individual interviews, but after the initial question was asked the participants took ownership of the conversation through their discussion and the sharing of ideas with one another. During the focus group interview, teachers elaborated on their perceptions of professionalism as well as negotiated their conceptions with each other relative to the context of both their previous experiences and experience at the University Laboratory School. The interviews and focus group interviews provided me with insight on how teachers negotiated professionalism with themselves, and with their colleagues. The three-tiered method of data collection allowed time

(about 2-5 weeks) between the survey and the interview, or focus groups to reflect on their perceptions of professionalism after being prompted in the initial survey. A number of the participants expressed that the term professionalism and what it means to them is not something that they have ever, or often think about. The time between the survey and the interviews allowed teachers to think about their perceptions of professionalism and provide elaborated descriptions in the interview.

Data Analysis

The initial iteration of data analysis occurred simultaneously with data collection at the conclusion of each tier in the data collection. Data was analyzed within and across each instance of data collection (Maxwell, 2013). Memos were written to capture analytic thoughts throughout the data collection process. All the interview audio was transcribed and notes were recorded during the transcription process. The interviews were transcribed and coded using the method of open coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). Initially, the data was coded in accordance with the five categories for professionalism determined by the conceptual framework. While there was some overlap in teachers' responses, the responses were categorized into the theme that was most appropriate. Given the open nature of survey, interview, and focus group questions, sub-themes and additional themes emerged beyond the conceptual framework and will be further elaborated in the discussion of the findings.

Validity

To avoid threats to the validity of this study, I utilized the following strategies suggested in the literature (Maxwell 2013, Merriam & Tisdell, 2016): triangulation, adequate engagement in the data collection, rich descriptions, and maximum variation.

In order to triangulate the data, a variety of methods including a survey, interviews, focus group interviews, and memos were collected and analyzed. Triangulation helped to affirm the emerging findings through the process of multiple data collection methods (Maxwell, 2013). Additionally, within the bounded unit of analysis adequate time was spent collecting data, which included seeking discrepant cases to the preliminary findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Due to the qualitative nature of this study, rich data was collected through detailed interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys with each of the teacher participants. Further details were captured in memos taken throughout the data collection process and allowed for preliminary findings and initial theories to be documented.

During participant selection, maximum variation was employed by only limiting participation to those within the unit of analysis. Participants were not selected, or limited based on gender, years of teaching, subject taught, or educational background. Such diversity in the sample allowed for the inclusion of a variety of experiences and avoided key informant bias (Maxwell, 2013).

External Validity

Given the in-depth and bounded nature of a qualitative case study, questions regarding external validity, or generalizability inherently arise. While this study seeks to understand the phenomena of teacher professionalism within a particular school site, much of the study focuses on providing the context from which these findings emerge. Existing research (La Victoria 2015, Tschannen-Moran 2009) suggests that teachers' enacted professionalism is manifested differently according to context and that the local school context, specifically administration and fellow teachers play a role in influencing teacher's enactment of professionalism. As such, this study will highlight the importance of understanding teacher perceptions of professionalism as

they emerge in context and raise important questions about the role of context in enhancing or constraining teacher professionalism.

Researcher Assumption and Limitation

As described in Chapter 2, the literature suggests a difference between professionalism and professionalization. This study is seeking to understand the phenomenon of teacher professionalism, and therefore assumes teaching to be a profession in terms of its status. Therefore, allowing the key characteristics of a profession, as agreed upon in the literature, to operate as the conceptual framework for this study.

Although the researcher of this study, I am also a secondary teacher of mathematics and during the time of study was a teacher of record at the school site. Therefore, in addition to the researcher relationship, I also held a collegiate relationship with each of the participants. Additionally, I therefore had substantial knowledge of both the history, culture, and governance of the school. While my position at the school posed a risk for researcher bias, I countered that bias by critically analyzing my own perceptions of the topic at the beginning of the study, and utilizing the strategies articulated to ensure the validity of the study.

CHAPTER 4

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT: THE UNIVERSITY LABORATORY SCHOOL

The University Laboratory School (ULS) is a public charter school and because its mission, history and status as a charter school, it was selected for the site of this study. As such, it is important to explore the context of ULS, and its history and mission as it relates to the current school culture and mission for educating its students. ULS is situated on the University of Hawai′i at Mānoa campus near the university's College of Education. The University Laboratory School is not named for its geographic location on the university campus, but for its long-standing history as a part of the College of Education in the university beginning in 1931. ULS, however, has roots dating back further to the formation of a teacher-training department at Honolulu High School in 1895. In 1896, the teacher-training department was relocated and renamed Honolulu Normal and Training School (University Laboratory School Report, 2015). The school served as a site to prepare and train pre-service teachers. In 1898, Hawai′i was annexed by the United States, and in 1905 the Honolulu Normal and Training School was renamed the Territorial Normal and Training School (King, 2000). In 1921, the school was moved to a lot adjoining the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa and Benjamin Wist was named the principal of the school until 1931, when the Hawai‘i State Legislature transferred the school to the School of Education, which was also then renamed as the Teachers College (King, 2000). According to King (2000), it was at that time, that Benjamin Wist was named dean of the Teachers College. Between 1931 and 1948, elementary school, intermediate school, and high school buildings were constructed on the Teachers College site (King, 2000). Additionally, Castle Memorial Hall was built as a training site for kindergarten and nursery school teachers. In

1959, the Teachers College was renamed as the College of Education (King, 2000; University Laboratory School Report, 2015).

The 1960s brought about times of change for the state of Hawai‘i, which included the state of public education. The Democratic Party grasped control over the legislature, as well as governorship, and was pushing for quality schools as a means for social betterment and class mobility(King, 2000). Federal monies were flowing into the state and directed at the development and research of educational programs and innovation (King, 2000). The College of Education began adding and filling faculty positions with those who had experience in research, and who contributed to the emerging status of the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa campus as a research institution (King, 2000). With research becoming an increasing part of the College's function, through support of the university administration and state legislature, the Educational Research and Development Center (EDRAD) was created (King, 2000). Research was also occurring in the laboratory schools as well. In addition to their duties as classroom teachers and trainers of teachers, staff at the laboratory schools began researching and experimenting with curricula and programs that were being developed both locally and nationally. Dr. Hubert Everly, then dean of the College of Education, recognized the potential for the three laboratory schools (elementary, intermediate, and high school) as sites of curricula research and experimentation (King, 2000).

Laboratory schools, or "training schools" and "model schools" as they have been called, have been a part of the American education system since the mid-1880s and played the critical function of preparing teachers and, in many cases were a necessity for the establishment of an official state normal school (Buck & Miller, 1991). In 1857, Pennsylvania legislature passed the Normal School Act of 1857, which required by law the presence of a model school of one

hundred students before it would designate an official state normal school (Fritz, 1985 as cited in Buck & Miller, 1991). Public schools at this time were mostly staffed with younger and less educated, or trained teachers, whereas in the model school, the professors taught pedagogy and provided supervision to the teachers in training school (Buck & Miller, 1991). The development of normal schools swept across the country in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and as a result, so too boomed the laboratory school movement. At its peak, 70 percent of normal schools in the country had their own model school (Buck & Miller, 1991). However, as compulsory education was expanding and the number of students increasing, the demand for trained teachers also grew. Many of the nation's laboratory schools were too small to meet the increasing demand. Teachers Colleges needed to adjust and find ways to accommodate the influx of teachers (Buck & Miller, 1991; King 2000). In 1948, the American Association of Teachers modified its 1926 standard that required teacher colleges to maintain a training school under its control, to include that teachers could practice teaching in an acceptable and accessible off-campus school (Buck & Miller, 1991). The use of public schools as clinical sites, however, presented its own challenges. Teachers at public school sites were underprepared to act as clinical supervisors, teachers did not desire the added responsibility to their instructional duties, and school sites were overwhelmed with student observers in the classrooms (Buck & Miller, 1991).

Following the Second World War, critics of the normal schools felt those who were masters of the disciplines should do the teacher training. Normal schools responded by increasing the faculty with those who were experts in the academic subjects (Buck & Miller, 1991). "The remolding of the faculties diluted commitment to the single purpose of training teachers. People with the competence in liberal arts subjects brought an orientation to the advancement of their subject area rather than to the advancement of teaching" (Buck & Miller,

1991, p. 6). Normal schools transformed and blended into multipurpose institutions, resulting in shifts and rifts amongst faculty. According to Buck and Miller (1991), the new departments that emerged often disagreed with teacher educators over matters of theory, practice, and the nature of knowledge necessary for teaching. Some of the new departments, "…showed disdain for the pedagogical emphasis in training, believing that the professional courses lacked both rigor and a body of substantive knowledge, making them less worthy than the liberal arts. This persistent mind-set shifted the allocation of resources, ultimately affecting the fate of laboratory schools" (Buck & Miller, 1991, p. 7). In essence, the laboratory school had gone from a necessary and critical part of teacher education, to just another department foraging for university resources. In the post war era of the 1960s, enrollment in university education increased, and university resources tightened (Buck & Miller, 1991). Lack of space and money forced universities to prioritize programs, and without strong university faculty support laboratory schools were often closed (King, 2000). Some laboratory schools were able to respond to these pressures and redefined their role to serve the greater needs of the university to justify their purpose (King, 2000).

Influenced by the Stiles' Report, a study that argued both economic and educational reasons for the conversion of laboratory schools into educational research centers, the Laboratory Schools at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa campus began undergoing internal reorganization to convert the schools into a site of educational research (King, 1991). Stiles argued that laboratory schools as sites of educational research could draw external funding from emerging resources through the federal government. Additionally, laboratory schools could help keep teachers up to date on the latest educational advancements, as well as address educational concerns unique to the local context. In 1966, the three schools were merged into one University

Laboratory School (King, 1991). The student population was reduced and student selection was made on the basis of ethnicity, gender, academic ability, and socio-economic status to reflect the demographics of the state. The staff, which once served as clinical supervisors and classroom teachers, became teacher-researchers under the new organization (King, 1991).

To bolster external support for the applied research endeavor, Dr. Art King (then director of the University Laboratory School) saw an opportunity to collaborate and combine forces with the Department of Education given the DOE control over the funds for educational innovation under Title III of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (King, 2000). Dr. King, and William Savard (then head of research in the DOE), proposed a research unit that would be jointly maintained by the university and the DOE (King, 2000). The Hawai‘i Curriculum Center would focus on projects of interest to the public schools. The center ran from 1966-1969, when legislative pressures forced a split into two separate units, one controlled by the university, henceforth known as the Curriculum Research & Development Group (CRDG), and one unit run by the Department of Education, which was named the Curriculum Development and Technology Branch (King, 2000).

The University Laboratory School played an essential role in the work and success of the CRDG over the years. According to Dr. Art King, “The laboratory school keeps the project models alive and serves as the base for evaluation, for visitation, for training, and for subsequent revisions” (King, 2000, p. 24). Throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, the University Laboratory School housed the research and development of a number of educational programs and professional development.

Between 1966 and 2001, a number of educational programs and tools were developed, tested, and revised in University Laboratory School classrooms. By 1994, CRDG and ULS

hosted more than 2,000 of Hawai‘i’s teachers in professional development activities each year (Nakaso, 1994). Innovative and research-based programs such as Hawai‘i Marine Science Studies, Foundational Approaches in Science Teaching (FAST), Hawai‘i Algebra Learning Project, all had far-reaching impact over the years of development and implementation. In 1993, FAST had been used by about 400,000 students both nationally and internationally, with 16,400 students in Hawai‘i (Nakaso, 1994). During this time of heightened curriculum development and professional development for the associated CRDG-developed programs, ULS did not serve as its once did, as a clinical training site for pre-service teachers. ULS served its new mission as a site for development and testing of innovative educational programs. However, while much of the research and development continued through the 1990s, the educational environment surrounding the laboratory school was rapidly changing. The era of the standards reform movement was quickly gaining hold in the national education arena. Much of the CRDG and ULS developed curricula and programs were developed over the course of years of research and were not adept to the rapid changes of the standards reform movement. Coinciding with the push for increased accountability of teachers and schools to meet the state-mandated educational standards, teachers and schools sought refuge in textbooks and curricula that were aligned to the state standards and educational objectives. State assessments accompanied the standards, of which public schools were required to participate in the state testing. Curricula development and innovation fell to the wayside, as did funding for small-scale curriculum research and development projects. If they were going to continue to operate both ULS, CRDG would need to adapt to the changing educational landscape.

Despite the national and global success of CRDG-developed programs and the imperative role of ULS in the development of those programs, university funding of ULS was cut in the late

1990s. ULS operated for two years on donations while in the process of becoming a public charter school, one of Hawai‘i’s first. On August 16th, 2001, ULS was granted charter school status and funding of the school shifted under the state Board of Education and the Department of Education. In 2009, employees of ULS were transitioned from University employees to public school teachers, protected by the Hawai‘i State Teachers Association (HSTA). As a charter school, ULS now operates as a public school of choice, free from many of the regulations that apply to more traditional public schools. In exchange for this increased autonomy from regulation, charter schools are often held to a greater level of accountability. While ULS is now independent from the University of Hawai‘i, it maintains its connection to the university through its mission, education research and development agenda, and partnership with the Curriculum Research & Development Group. As a charter school, ULS serves two interlocking missions: “to design and deliver the best possible education to our own students, and to serve the educational research and development community as a seedbed for innovation” (University Laboratory School Report, 2015). To that end, ULS is the only school in the state that focuses both on the educational research and development, as well as the dissemination of educational materials and pedagogical strategies. Teachers at ULS are still considered teacher-researchers. During the negotiations of the ULS Supplemental Agreement to the HSTA Master Contract, teachers on the ULS negotiating team asked that the Supplemental Agreement include research as a teaching duty. This means that a ULS teacher can conduct research as part of his or her teaching load, up to twenty percent full-time equivalent. To qualify for research credits, teachers must propose a research agenda that is approved by both the ULS faculty and Partnership Coordination Committee (PCC). The PCC consists of five appointed members, two from the university and three from the ULS Governing Board and gives the final approval for all teacher research

projects. During the 2015-2016 school year, six ULS teachers submitted research project ideas and five were approved by the PCC.

As the educational landscape surrounding laboratory schools has shifted, so too has the role and function, and perhaps as some may argue, necessity, of laboratory schools, ULS included, in the American education system. In his 1987 address at the for the National Association of Laboratory Schools (NALS) Convention, Dr. Art King spoke of the importance of laboratory schools finding their "niche" amid a changing landscape if they are to continue existing.

> The term 'niche' is used by environmental biologists to identify the particular place within the larger environment that permits species to exist. For example, a bug, or plant, or a fish exists in a narrow range of environmental conditions that permit it to sustain life, to interact with other species, to reproduce, and to gain the necessary protection and resources. If this environment changes because of pollution, changes in other species, or the introduction of predators, the particular species may find itself in jeopardy. It can survive only by moving or changing: it must find a new niche or adapt its old one (King, 1987, p. 4-5).

King (1987) argues that the continued study of laboratory schools in the larger macro-environment is a constant and necessary task of laboratory schools such that laboratory schools can better adapt within the environment to find their place, or niche in American education.

As evident from its history, ULS has had to "re-niche" over the years with profound changes in American education. In its earliest form, the laboratory school served the mission of giving pre-service teachers classroom demonstrations and experiences under the clinical supervision of educated and experienced professionals in the field and later professors at the Teachers College, and later still the College of Education. The school helped to train many of the

teachers that would enter the teacher workforce in the state. In its early environment, the laboratory school was also seen and purposed as a place of educational innovation to explore ideas about the nature of teaching and of student learning. This early environment made way for the changes that arose in the 1960s when the laboratory schools came under one, University Laboratory School and the site became primarily a seedbed for educational research and development. For many years ULS and CRDG were successful in their shared mission of developing impactful educational programs and tools through research and innovation. Many CRDG developed programs that are still used in schools across the Hawai‘i, the United States, and in other countries such as Russia, and nations in the Pacific. Today, both ULS and CRDG are making efforts in achieving their shared mission of research, creating, evaluating, and disseminating quality educational programs to both teachers and students.

ULS Research and Dissemination: A Model for Public Education

Since the split in 2001, ULS and CRDG have continued their partnership and mission to serve education. In the last 5-7 years, and with the support of CRDG, ULS has been researching and developing tools and strategies for technological integration in the classroom and has become a leader in technological integration for the state. A number of DOE teachers, administration, and Information Technology staff have visited ULS classrooms to see effective technology use in action. According to the University Laboratory School Report (2015), ULS hosts hundreds of visitors each year who come to visit and learn from the programs and educational practices being taught in ULS classrooms. In the 2015-2016 school year, the mathematics department at ULS worked closely with a public school mathematics department to support them in curriculum, pedagogy, and departmental collaboration. In 2011, CRDG was contracted by the Department of Education to develop a supplemental algebra course for students

struggling to learn algebra in the DOE (nearly one-third of Hawai‘i’s public education students fail Algebra I the first time taking the course). Many of the lessons and activities for the curriculum materials were trialed in ULS’ Algebra I classroom, and ULS teachers were consulted during the development process. The *History of Hawai‘i*, a textbook used in many schools across the state, is releasing a third edition in the summer of 2016. The lead author on the revisions is a social studies teacher from ULS. These few examples demonstrate the importance and impact of the ULS mission, and the school’s ability to fulfill that mission.

ULS: A School for its Students

While ULS does serve public education writ large, it also maintains to provide the best in education to its own student population. For indicators of success, ULS takes a more holistic approach by looking at student participation in athletics, performing and visual arts awards, as well as academic achievement on external measures, and post-graduation acceptance. In the 2014-2015 school year, 93% of ULS students participated in an athletics program, and 98% went on to post-secondary education programs (University Laboratory School Report, 2015). Since 2011, ULS has outperformed both the state and national averages on the ACT, and typically has one of the highest averages for charter schools in the state. The overarching learner outcomes across all ULS programs are critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication. ULS programs are researched and designed to address these learner outcomes. ULS has not only been successful in research and dissemination, but clearly also has demonstrated success as a thriving school environment for its students.

Re-niching for 21st Century America: From Laboratory to Charter School Context

Charter Schools: A brief history. Although the University Laboratory School had a long-standing history as a laboratory school, and a normal school prior to that, since 2001 ULS

has been a public-charter school. In fact, one of the first charter schools in the state. Accompanying that designation are significant changes in the structure of the school impacting funding, teacher contracts, school requirements, and student admissions. Those shifts are relevant to the context of the school site in which the phenomenon of teacher professionalism is being researched. Therefore, it is worth briefly discussing the charter school movement in American education and some of the changes that occurred at ULS as a result of the school's shift to a public-charter school.

Prior to the 1990s, state legislation that approved charter schools were non-existent, but by the dawn of the twenty-first century 2,000 charter schools had been established across 37 states (Renzulli & Roscigno, 2005). By 2006, approximately 2% of the student population in the United States was served by charter schools (Hanushek, Kain, Rivkin, Branch, 2007). The school choice movement began in the 1990s in response to the criticism that public schools were underperforming. Charter schools allow for greater flexibility and innovation (while still subject to the government oversight) and, as a result, were thought to improve public schools through increased competition. The charter school movement emerged out of systemic reform focused on standardizing education and assessing achievement based on those standards. Wells (2002) describes this type of systemic reform as being an outcomes-based system of accountability. That is, "…schools have greater autonomy from regulation but must demonstrate their success in terms of student achievement" (Wells, 2002, p. 5). The charter school movement also coincided with, or emerged from the neo-liberal ideology that pervaded the 1990s, and resulted in efforts to cut back governmental involvement in public goods, and allow for greater market competition (Wells, 2002). In summary, the political arguments of the 1990s for systemic reform and

marketplace competition to efficiently and effectively enhance public education made way for charter school reform.

Charter school legislation occurs at the state level and allows groups (teachers, parents, communities, businesses) to form a public school outside of the traditional public school bureaucracy. In exchange for greater independence and flexibility, charter schools are subject to greater measures of accountability in accordance with a school's charter contract. The exact terms of charter school legislation differ by state. In Hawai‘i, charter schools are funded on a per-pupil allocation and operate under a contract with the State Public Charter School Commission (SPCSC). Each charter school has its own governing board, which works closely with the school administration to oversee that the school is complying with the terms set forth in the charter school contract. When ULS became a public charter school in 2001, significant changes occurred within the school. Prior to the shift, teachers at ULS were employed by the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa College of Education. Teachers at ULS were considered lecturers, where part of their time was spent teaching students and the other part of their time was engaged in educational research. Responsibility for the school governance (above school administration) was held by the University of Hawai‘i College of Education. Following the shift, teachers at ULS were considered employees of the State Department of Education, and were subject to state accountability measures, such as standardized assessments, and requiring highly-qualified teachers, as stipulated in the charter school performance contract. Additionally, teachers had to be placed on the Department of Education salary schedule, which did not necessarily correspond to teachers' salaries prior to the change. Many teachers at ULS were also not considered "highly qualified", as defined by No Child Left Behind. This meant that teachers who had taught at ULS for a number of years had to go back to school to receive their teaching

credentials. Although the shift to a public charter was necessary for the existence of the school, the changes that came along with it were not without impact to the structure and governance of the school, as well as the teachers within it.

The University Laboratory School has a unique history and identity. With deep roots in the age of educational research, its long-standing view of teachers as researcher, and current status as a public charter school, ULS provides a unique and interesting context as the case for this study, to better understand teacher perceptions of professionalism as they emerge from within this context.

CHAPTER 5

TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM: FINDINGS FROM THE UNIVERSITY LABORATORY SCHOOL

After conducting a thorough analysis of the focus group, interview, and survey data it became apparent that teacher perceptions of professionalism at ULS could be categorized into two overarching themes. The first, which will be referred to as the "basics of teacher professionalism," are the bare minimum professional aspects of the teaching profession that, if you are teacher, should be carried out. In other words, the bare minimum implies the explicit knowledge or tasks necessary for doing one's job within the teaching profession. However, while the basics of teacher professionalism for many of the teachers interviewed were important, carrying them out did not necessarily imply that a teacher was exhibiting professionalism. The data suggests that for the teachers at ULS, professionalism in teaching goes beyond simply doing the basics of one's job, or demonstrating the basic aspects of teacher professionalism. This leads to the second of the overarching themes that emerged from the data, "beyond the basics of teacher professionalism." For all of the teacher participants in this study, some or all of the beyond the basics aspects in addition to the basics are necessary for a teacher to be considered a professional in teaching. Both the basics, and beyond the basics of teacher professionalism will be discussed below in terms of the conceptual framework. That is, the findings below will describe each of the overarching themes and how those themes emerged in relation to the four characteristics of a profession: specialized body of knowledge, responsibility, collegiate collaboration, and autonomy.

Specialized Body of Knowledge

The Basics.

Content and Pedagogical Knowledge. In both the survey and interviews, 100% of the participants at ULS described knowledge as an aspect of their perception of teacher professionalism. For the teachers at ULS, it is important that a teacher has received the education necessary, such that a teacher is prepared to teach the subject content to students. Additionally, 100% of the teachers interviewed included content knowledge, as well as the knowledge of how to teach the content. One teacher stated that teacher professionalism means having a "…clear understanding of not only (the) academic subject, but also effective, well-rounded teaching practices and methods" (P#1, Survey, 2016). In order to teach students, a teacher must know and understand what they are teaching, and the appropriate methods for teaching within that discipline. Historically, at ULS there is an emphasis on teacher as practitioner of the discipline. That is, in addition to being an educator, a teacher is also a practitioner within the field. Another teacher wrote,

> …a professional teacher must be a master of his or her academic discipline as well. Too many colleges of education seem to believe that teaching individuals to create and follow lesson plans, to be facilitators rather than teachers is enough…A professional teacher knows her discipline because she emerged from that discipline (P#2, Survey, 2016).

For example, rather than teach chemistry because a teacher took one chemistry course in college, the teacher would have emerged from the field of chemistry, or at the very least had formal post-secondary education in the field. Teachers at ULS emphasized both content and pedagogical knowledge equally. One set of knowledge did not outweigh the other. This idea is counter to findings from a previous study (Tichenor & Tichenor, 2005) that found teachers emphasized pedagogical knowledge over content knowledge. This may relate to the long-standing tradition at ULS that teachers are also practitioners in the field in which they teach. On any given day at

ULS, an observer would see the art teacher creating art alongside the students, or an English teacher actively journal writing during the students required journal time, or publishing their own works. Although only two participants were referenced above, 100% of the teachers in the study cited knowledge of content and teaching methods as an important aspect of professionalism.

Beyond the Basics.

Continuous Learning. For the teachers at ULS, content knowledge and knowledge of how to teach in general, are fundamental aspects of teacher professionalism. While at the same time, the majority of the teachers interviewed discussed this aspect as a seemingly obvious and basic one. However, beyond the basics of teaching the content, teachers placed an emphasis on the idea of continued learning, or professional growth as an additional important aspect of teacher professionalism. The teachers that participated in the interview and focus group study conceded they still had much to learn, and as such, were always looking for growth opportunities. So strongly, did the majority of teachers in this study value the idea of continued learning, a few argued that without it, a teacher could not be considered a professional. For example, one teacher stated,

> If you're stagnant, I would personally consider you not professional because you're not growing. To me, that's what makes a profession. An engineer is going to grow in his engineering practice. The engineer would take courses to stay up on materials and that sort of thing. So to me, I can't even imagine being a professional and not growing (P#3, Interview, 2016).

The same teacher went on to state,

> I think teachers are expected to stay up on it…Wanting to read the latest research about how students are learning and wanting to read the latest about the best methods in teaching

> science, for example, and that sort of thing. You know, updating your curriculum, and constantly growing, changing, and moving as we learn new things. I think that's one of the things that makes me feel like a professional in my craft of teaching (P#3, Interview, 2016).

Teachers described continued learning in varying ways, namely, professional development workshops, trainings, educational conference attendance, self-motivated research, and learning through informal dialogue and collaboration with colleagues. For many public schools in Hawai'i, the Department of Education offers numerous opportunities for professional development for which public school teachers receive professional development credits necessary for the maintenance of their teacher license. For teachers at ULS, this is not the case. Per the most recent contract, ULS teachers are required to attend twenty-one hours of professional development over the course of the year. The administration at ULS empowered the teachers at ULS to collectively decide how those professional development hours should be spent. Unlike traditional public school teachers, teachers at ULS do not receive additional credit for any additional hours spent in professional development. Yet, despite the lack of credit, or recognition for time spent in professional development, teachers at ULS believe this to be a critical aspect of teacher professionalism.

In the survey, the majority of teachers described professionalism (using one, two, or all three of the terms) as the willingness to adapt and reflect. One teacher shared,

> …as far as what evaluation systems say and what's in your contract, you can follow all that to a 'T', but you are not going to be a great teacher, or a great professional in your field. I think it's something that you have to experience, and learn, and continually work at… in order to be effective teachers you have to be evolving faster than what's going on with the kids. So you can't be stagnant, you have got to keep moving (P#4, Survey, 2016).

Once again, this speaks to the idea of continued learning; however, the learning is situated primarily in the classroom with students. Professional teachers can reflect on a lesson and adapt to meet the needs of students. When asked to provide an example in your teaching experience, or of something you do on a regular basis that you feel embodies your perceptions of teacher professionalism, one teacher wrote, "I regularly evaluate my curriculum to see if I can better fit the needs of my students" (P#14, Survey, 2016). Another teacher wrote, "I am always tweaking my curricula and my delivery to try and make them more effective, helpful and engaging" (P#13, Survey, 2016).

Innovation and Experimentation. While continuous learning may include professional development through workshops, trainings, and self-motivated research, for the teachers at ULS, professionalism in teaching also means learning through innovation and experimentation in the classroom. This goes beyond just adapting lessons based on reflections and student needs. This means teachers being on the cutting edge of teaching practice and conducting both informal and formal studies in the classroom. "I think it (professionalism) means that teachers cannot 'settle'—they cannot relax either in their own efforts or their students'. It means we must always be looking at what we do and being smart enough (brave enough?) to innovate and create" (P#2, Survey, 2016). As an example of one teacher's enactment of professionalism; "Innovative teaching styles and curriculum are explored" (P#15, Survey, 2016). Another teacher cited his/her proposed and funded research study as an embodiment of his/her professionalism (P#5, Interview, 2016).

Responsibility

The Basics.

Day-to-Day Responsibilities and Expectations. Every teacher in this study used the term responsible, responsibility, or listed items described as responsibilities to articulate his or her perception of teacher professionalism. To be more specific, teachers highlighted professional dress (although, to varying degrees this aspect was emphasized), showing up to work on time, being prepared to teach classes with lesson plans, being organized, providing timely feedback to students, one's behavior in the classroom, and communicating effectively with students, parents, and colleagues. Many of these basic aspects of responsibility included how teachers look, talk, and act within their professional setting. These aspects were often referred to as basics, or when being interviewed, teachers alluded to the obvious or basic nature of these responsibility aspects of teaching.

The following four passages were taken from interviews with four different teachers and describe the basics of responsibility in teaching. In the first passage, the teacher refers to the basics responsibilities as the "smaller aspects" of professionalism, suggesting that these are some of the basic expectations for teachers in conducting their work.

> When I think about the smaller aspects (of professionalism), and not to diminutize them, but I think they're kind of the basic things that all teachers should have. Are you giving your kids feedback consistently? Or, are you just throwing grades at them that day? Are you giving them fifteen things back at once? That is not useful for kids. Are you consistently following up with students when they ask you questions? Do you have decent systems in place to interact with parents? That's some of the general day-to-day stuff. Are you showing up on time? Little things like that are important, they are things that we have to have happen (P#5, Interview, 2016).

In the second passage below, the teacher reiterates some of the basic responsibilities as in the passage above, such as providing students with feedback and grading work. Additionally, this teacher describes the basic responsibilities as doing what is expected of you. This suggests a baseline of responsibilities in teaching, but also that teachers may set additional responsibilities for themselves, beyond what is expected.

> As a teacher you have responsibilities, and to me it seems like it's our responsibility to grade work and give feedback. It's our responsibility to have lessons prepared for the day. I guess in terms of teacher professionalism; it's making sure that you are carrying out those responsibilities that are expected, or set by whoever, or yourself even, as to what responsibilities you do have (P#6, Interview, 2016).

Another teacher also expressed the idea of basic responsibilities in teaching and how they are expectations that have been set.

> The idea is to know what it means to be a teacher, to understand your content area really well, to be able to communicate, to be able to work with other people, to get along, to do your job and do what's expected of you in a timely manner generally. So that's sort of my basic ideas of professionalism. I don't tie a lot of what I wear to it so much, [sic] as to more how I approach the job and how I behave in the job and I take care of business and make sure everything is going as smoothly as I can make it happen. And that's what I generally push for and that's my own interpretation of me being professional (P#8, Focus Group, 2016).

In general, the teachers expressed a perception that there are specific responsibilities that are established expectations in the teaching profession.

Beyond the Basics.

Commitment and caring; The altruistic nature of professionalism. Although the basics of responsibility can be seen as the tasks necessary or expectations to doing one's job, and in many ways seem simple, the teachers at ULS describe how the intent behind those tasks moves the teacher beyond just doing one's job, and demonstrates a deep, pervasive commitment to teaching; a belief that the teacher not only teaches for the betterment of his or her pupils, but society as a whole, a belief in the moral enterprise of teaching. Showing up to work every day is a basic aspect of any job, but professional teachers show up every day because they care about their students and about education. In the survey, one teacher described commitment to students as the primary motivation for his/her professionalism (P#13, Survey, 2016). Another teacher stated,

> It sounds so simple, but showing up every day prepared to teach and give your all (100%) no matter what is going on around you in your personal life, embodies teacher professionalism. This shows students that you are there for them, that learning is important, and that you are a team. [sic] Really showing them that they are valued and that education is valuable (P#9, Interview, 2016).

One teacher described how he/she comes to work even when sick, because the students and the job are so important (P#7, Interview, 2016). In the interview this teacher stated,

> Being responsible. You got to get up, and you got to come to school. And there are days you don't want to come, you don't feel good, but you know you have a responsibility to them (students), you have got to come (P#7, Interview, 2016).

Professional teaching requires a commitment to teaching that reflects the altruistic nature of teacher professionalism. That is, teaching is "…formally coupled to the public enterprise of being collectively oriented, rather than self-oriented" (Solbrekke & Englund, 2011, p. 849). The

findings at ULS suggest that the teachers recognize the altruistic nature of the profession that requires, first and foremost, a commitment and loyalty to the students. A commitment to best practice in an attempt to meet the needs of all students is then recognized as a contribution to society as a whole.

The following excerpts from various survey responses, interviews, and focus group interviews portray teachers' conceptions of professionalism in terms of their responsibility to the profession and their commitment to students and to education. In the first quote, the teacher also uses the word passion to articulate commitment to teaching. This teacher is passionate about both the students' learning, and the subject.

> Well, the reason I became a teacher and I would think the reason that most people become teachers is that they are passionate about helping children. I mean, in whatever way you think about that, you know, I want to make our world better, I want to help those that are underserved [sic]. There are many different ways, but ultimately it boils down to I believe, I like working with children, and I want to help them learn. Period. I mean, I don't think that many people get into it for the money, or for the, 'I like standing in front of people and talking all the time', because there is a lot of work that goes into becoming a really good teacher and if you don't have love for the students, and love for your subject area, and want them to feel that way, then you're not going to put in the time that it takes. So I do think that every single thing we do, even on the department chair level, when I think about that, it always boils down to student, and student learning, and supporting the students (P#9, Interview, 2016).

> We have an obligation as professional teachers to serve the best educational experience as possible to our students and their families (P#10, Focus Group, 2016).

> Finally, a professional teacher never loses sight of her students as individuals to whom she owes as much attention, skill, and patience as she can manage. She knows her responsibility to them (P#2, Survey, 2016).

> I am a professional teacher. I will consider my students first. Everything I do is ultimately for the students, for their success, for their well-being and the school (P#3, Survey, 2016).

> We intrinsically care about our kids. We value them and we want to do right by them (P#5, Interview, 2016).

> I was always trying because I care. I think if you are a professional, then you care about what you do and you are always trying to make it better. I mean, if you don't care, and whatever is okay, then to me that's not really as professional as the idea of always trying to really improve it. Always trying to strive for something better if you can. If sometimes you plateau and things are the way they are, [sic] I think if you get to the point where you don't care about making things better, then that is the time to retire…So I think we have to have the sense of caring and to care enough to improve yourself and the work that the kids do (P#8, Focus Group, 2016).

The majority of the teachers who were interviewed, or participated in a focus group interview expressed commitment and care for the profession of teaching and most importantly for the

students, as an aspect of professionalism. They expressed recognition of the importance of their work and the contributions they can make in the lives of their students, as well as to society and the field of education. At the center of all their decisions are the students; the students are at the heart of professionalism.

Collegiate Collaboration

The Basics.

Respecting and Supporting One Another. The structure of schools within which teachers conduct their work, requires that multiple teachers be within close proximity of one another on a daily basis. Teachers at ULS share both classrooms and small office spaces. Therefore, the ways in which teacher interact with one another contributes to the overall work environment. As such, teachers at ULS felt that, on a basic level, teachers should be respectful and kind to one another. In a focus group discussion, three teachers discussed the way in which negativity from colleagues can lead to a toxic environment. "You can't be a toxic worker. I think especially in teaching because you absorb so much" (P#12, Focus Group, 2016). In response, another teacher replied, "You are so correct! I have never experienced it personally, but a friend of mine on the mainland is going through a very difficult time these last few years because her colleague is not professional at all" (P#3, Focus Group, 2016). This basic aspect of collegiate collaboration was not discussed by teachers on the survey, however, emerged primarily in the focus group interviews

Beyond the Basics.

Collaboration and Culture. The majority teachers surveyed at ULS described meaningful collaboration with colleagues as an important aspect of professionalism. Beyond treating each other with respect, teachers cited the importance of sharing ideas, working together,

and negotiating differences for the sake of both individual growth, and a common goal and commitment to the students and school. Through discourse, professional teachers establish shared culture, values, and norms. The teachers at ULS particularly focused on the professional growth of the individual, as well as the school that emerges from professional collaboration. "Professionalism is not just how you conduct your job, but how you engage in discourse with peers. Sharing of information is key to growth and teachers should always be looking for ways to improve" (P#11, Survey, 2016). Another teacher shared in her interview the importance of collegiate collaboration and being open-minded during the collaborative process. Collaboration is not just about sharing ideas, but the incorporation of ideas into practice.

> I think you mentioned that I talked about collaboration as well. No person is an island. Like [sic] no teacher should be an island, because you are not able to grow as a professional if you think all you do is the only way. You never get to experience anything new, or see what other people do, see something that's innovative. So I think that collaboration amongst teachers, especially within the field is helpful. Again, my background is science, so to see what other science teachers are doing, how they approach difficult topics, and share with them. But, also taking the opportunity to talk to other teachers in other fields, because how they approach certain aspects of education I think are equally as valuable in your subject area and can be used in your subject area. But you wouldn't know that if you don't collaborate, and you are not open minded to see that. So to me, a professional teacher, being professionally minded [sic] wants to continue to learn and grow, and are open to all ideas (P#4, Interview, 2016).

That same teacher went on to explain,

> Professional teachers realize they are life-long learners and rely on and work with each other to better their practice. Inter and Intra departmental collaboration is key, no discipline can be successful without relying on the practices and skills of other disciplines (P#4, Interview, 2016).

One teacher described how earlier on in his/her career, he/she viewed professionalism in teaching as just doing one's job, now he/she sees professionalism as working with colleagues in the profession as well. He/she attributed the collaborative structures at ULS as contributing to that shift in his perception of teacher professionalism. This teacher described his enactment of professionalism as, "I yell from the rooftops all the things I learn in my classroom. Maybe too loud…We should be teaching each other, as well as the kids" (P#11, Survey, 2016).

Autonomy

As articulated by the conceptual framework for this study, the freedom for teachers to exercise professional judgement is a core tenet of the teaching profession. This idea was echoed in an interview when one teacher stated, "…but that was something that separates a professional from someone who's not necessarily someone who's in charge of what they do with their time" (P#3, Interview, 2016).

Autonomy was the only one of the four core tenets of professionalism that the teachers at ULS did not describe as having a basic aspect. For the teachers at ULS, autonomy is either granted in its fullest extent, or it is not. Teachers at ULS describe autonomy in teaching in two main ways, 1) the freedom to exercise judgement in matters of the curriculum and instruction, and 2) freedom in how instructional, as well as non-instructional time is spent. The altruistic nature of professionalism articulated by the teachers, coupled with teachers' specialized knowledge in both content and teaching, is a recipe for teachers' ability to make professional

decisions in their classroom based on both the context and the needs of the students. As articulated previously, the bottom line for the teachers at ULS is the students. The teachers at ULS described wanting the best for the students and perceive the only way they can enact their version of professionalism to its fullest extent is when they are given or granted autonomy. In other words, lack of teacher autonomy and freedom results in constraints on teachers' ability to enact professionalism to the full extent they perceive necessary. Autonomy, or freedom is therefore an aspect of professionalism that is perceived to be granted and specific to the school context.

> But, I think just feeling like I have the agency to do this in my classroom [sic]. So having, again, a great amount of flexibility in how I deliver my curriculum allows me to look for things, and take from things, and try different things, which I think leads to growth. And it doesn't have to take the form of a full-blown semester in college or professional development class, or workshop that ends usually with a portfolio full of 'schmevidence'. – Participant #12

Teaching is an,

> … experimental process that might be better the next day, and therefore be much more efficient. It's not a linear process; it's cyclical. So I think that's why it matters, it's trusting the process, and that I know how to do this process, and that I know what my kids need. – Participant #5

Additionally, autonomy leads to a sense, or relationship of trust between the administration and the teachers. Teachers at ULS went on to articulate that where autonomy is granted, there is a perceived sense of trust and support of teachers from the school

administration. Teachers describe feeling trusted and respected because they are given autonomy in their teaching. One teacher expressed,

> …we're respected in the fact that, or trusted even, [sic] I feel like we're trusted to do what we're supposed to do. There is not that microscopic, 'How are you conducting every moment of your day? I need to have your plans.' The whole signing in and signing out thing [sic]. We're given more flexibility and leeway in how we conduct ourselves throughout the day. If I need to leave early, and do my work home, it's understood. After working at schools where that's not the atmosphere, where you have to sign in and you have to find out, you have to turn in lesson plans at the beginning of the week before you start; we need to see everything laid out. Not that they don't ask for plans and stuff here (ULS), it's just done in a different atmosphere. It's not that microscopic, under the thumb, make sure you do what you're supposed to be doing. We're trusted that we're doing what we're supposed to be doing… (P#3, Interview, 2016).

With regard to trust another teacher stated,

> For me, autonomy equates to trust. So the fact that I can try something, the fact that I know that if I woke up on a Tuesday I can say I'm going to do this with my kids and I think it will actually help them, and to not feel afraid to at least run that by someone, that for me equates to trust. Someone trusts that I'm going to do my job well, or someone trusts that I know enough about my practice to try something (P#5, Interview, 2016).

For one teacher administrative trust allows teacher creativity.

> They (administration) trust that I can take a textbook and make it creative, and make it fit the kids, and switch any unit into making it more hands on. They trust that if I'm teaching

from the top of my desk it's because that's what I need to do that day, and that's fine. I love the creative space that we are given here (P#7, Interview, 2016).

Alternatively, a lack of autonomy leads to a sense of distrust.

I think that I am professional enough, and they (administration) trust that I'm going to do my job. They trust that I have my students' best interest at heart, and they trust that generally I know what I'm doing. I think when we don't have that autonomy, I think that when we're restricted and we are given curriculum that we have no vested interest in, or we can't change anything or add anything to better me our students, I think that sends a sign of distrust. 'I don't trust you to do your job. I don't trust that you know what you're doing. I don't think you're going to do what's best for your students, so let me give it to you.' I think it's really hard to see yourself as a professional if you think everyone thinks that you don't know how to do your job. If everyone assumes that you're crap, you get the message that society, or government, or the state, or your superintendent think you're crap at your job, or don't trust you to come up with stuff on your own. I wouldn't value myself as an educator, I would think I'm just parroting lessons. I'm just feeding stuff to the masses. So that's why for me it matters. It's not so much that I feel like I need power. It's more, do you trust that I'm going to do right by my students? Because it also means that if I try something and it fails, then I'm going to right the ship (P#5, Interview, 2016).

Interestingly, another finding that emerged from the teachers at ULS is that when teachers are given autonomy, there is a sense that they are professional because, by being given autonomy they are being "treated" like a professional. That is, professional autonomy gives teachers an internal sense of being a professional. One teacher described,

> So being treated as a professional means that as a teacher I was given the liberty and freedom to teach my class as I thought best for my students. While following state standards and protocol that you need to do, but there is never a question as to whether or not I know what I am doing. The assumption was, she knows what she is doing and she is doing it well unless we see otherwise. I appreciate that because it gives you freedom to try things, and it gives you the freedom to feel safe. I mean it's just like students; we create a safe place from them to try things out and to experiment and take risks. But, at the same time following a path that they know is right. So I think that when I feel like I am being treated like a professional, that's what I am being given. I am being given the freedom to do what I need to do, but at the same time do it in my own way. Because I am trusted that I am doing the right thing for my students and that I am responsible. I have been to schools where you check in and check out. They clock every second of your time. I have worked at schools where no one knows if I am even in my classroom. And there are good things and bad things about that, but I think the more we treat teachers as professionals, [sic] I would hope that they would rise to that rather than see it as an easy way to get out of working so hard. But, to instead see it as a great responsibility that they can rise to the occasion and meet that (P#4, Interview, 2016).

However, if teachers do not feel that sense of professionalism and are required to work in an environment that constraints autonomy, they may be less inclined to enact their perceptions of professionalism, or shift their perceptions altogether to where professional encompasses only the basics of doing one's job. For example, one teacher explained,

> I think when people don't feel supported [sic] that's the attitude they take, like if I, if you are not going to support me and you are saying all I have to do is the bare minimum, and

then that's all I am going to do. But, it comes from people who don't feel supported. If they have support, then they want to give more (P#8, Focus Group, 2016).

Summary

In summary, teachers at ULS describe the substance of the four tenets as having both basic aspects and beyond the basic aspects, with the exception of autonomy, which is either granted or restricted. The teachers at ULS perceive professionalism to require the beyond the basic aspects as described above. That is, the teachers at ULS describe a professionalism that goes beyond the basic job expectations, and as one teacher stated, "Doing your job is not enough. Professionalism should have a broader definition than wearing pants to school" (P#11, Survey, 2016). While this statement may be a humorous simplification of the idea, it suggests that there are some basic ideas of professionalism in teaching that encompasses only the basic expectations, as described by teachers, for the job. However, the perception of professionalism amongst teachers at ULS is one that they clearly articulate must move beyond those basic expectations and include innovation and experimentation in the classroom, the desire to grow and be better at teaching, research, meaningful collaboration with peers, and a deep commitment to the teaching profession and to the students.

The table below summarizes the findings from the University Laboratory School in terms of the conceptual framework.

Core Tenet of a Profession	Basics of Professionalism	Beyond the Basics of Professionalism
Specialized Body of Knowledge	• Content knowledge • Pedagogical knowledge	• Continuous learning and growth • Innovation and experimentation • Research
Responsibility	• Professional dress • Communication • Classroom conduct and behavior • Being present and punctual • Providing students with timely feedback • Being organized and prepared to teach daily	• Commitment to students, education, and society • Needs and best interest of the students are the priority
Collegiate Collaboration	Basics • Respectful conduct towards colleagues	• Sharing of information • Willingness to listen and learn from colleagues • Negotiate meaning and values
Autonomy		• Freedom to exercise professional judgement with regard to curriculum, instructional practice, and time

Table 1: Summary of findings from ULS.

In addition to the responses from teachers that were coded and categorized in terms of the four core tenets of a profession, additional findings emerged from the data with regard to professionalism as it relates to the school context, who decides what teacher professionalism means, and the role of society on teachers' conceptions of professionalism as perceived by the teachers. These findings are important additional insights into the nature of professionalism as perceived by teachers. These findings move beyond the characteristics and substance of professionalism and provide insight on the interplay between teachers' enacted professionalism and the macro-level and micro-level contexts and discourse surrounding education.

Professionalism Embedded in the ULS Context

The findings suggest that teachers' general conceptions of professionalism at the University Laboratory School is both supported and shared by the administration and amongst the teachers. The majority of teachers in this study described ULS as a unique, collaborative, caring, and close-knit community in which they feel respected, trusted, and supported by the administration and their colleagues. One teacher wrote that ULS is

> …awesome, collaborative, professional, caring, and safe. I have worked at schools where administration does zero to support teachers. I still have to pinch myself when I see and experience the support we get here" (P#7, Interview, 2016).

In response to the same survey question, which asked teachers to describe ULS, one teacher wrote,

> I like the University Laboratory School. The school is friendly and welcoming, the culture nurturing, and the adults positive and professional. The work environment is functional and pleasant and the relationships between students, teachers, and staff are largely positive. The school embodies positivity, as I feel that the adults are supportive of each other and are genuinely good people. They show interest in their workplace and care for the maintaining of a positive environment. Teachers do not hide away, they enjoy each other's company and often converse about non-school related issues and show respect and care for each other. There is a culture of forward thought and not one of blame. There is virtually no toxicity between teachers, departments, or the administration, and, for the most part, there is a good amount of transparency. The positive tone sets a productive mood and helps teachers focus on their work. Teachers are trusted and not regularly scrutinized by administrators or other teachers and have flexibility when it comes to lesson design, curricular choices, and pedagogy. This flexibility allows teachers to be creative, to explore

> different approaches, and to dare to fail gloriously – which is essential for their own development. I think that teachers feel ownership of their creative work and feel empowered and encouraged to seek out new ways to teach (P#12, Survey, 2016).

In an interview, one teacher described how he/she feels supported by administration and his/her colleagues at ULS and how support relates to his/her sense of professionalism. This teacher explained,

> Here, I feel supported by them (administration), which is a big thing. Whenever we have parent meetings I always feel supported and backed up. I don't know if people realize how awesome that is, because at my old school it was always the parents were right, it was always the teacher's fault. I would be in parent meetings where I would be the bad guy, and the administration is siding with the parents because they don't want to make them more upset. But, just that feeling from administration that you have support, they value what you do, they value your perception of things and your professionalism [sic]. You are a professional and what you say and what you are doing is valid. And then it's one thing that I noticed right away when I first started working here with the administration [sic]. And the colleagues here, I feel like we're all here to support each other. We are all like-minded, and we have similar values, and we are all passionate in the same way about the students and education. I really feel like this is a close-knit group of friends or family, yeah more like family. Some people don't always get along and have different personalities, but we are all here for this common goal (P#6, Interview, 2016).

Another teacher described shock at the level of administrative support experienced at ULS relative to previous experiences at public schools.

> The fact that we were at a faculty meeting two or three months ago, and administration were asking us what we wanted to do with our twenty-one hours [sic]. I think I even raised my hand and said, 'What? Am I understanding this correctly?' They actually care what we want to do. I mean I am still new, but I am learning that if I wanted to go to a conference, as long as I submit for it the right way, then they are willing to send us. Or, even being able to prep where we need to be able to prep [sic]. At most schools, even though it says in the HSTA contract, because I read it, [sic] it says you can prep wherever you need to prep. But, other schools, at least the school I was at, they made sure that you were in your classroom prepping, and if you were not in your classroom prepping you had to sign in and tell them where you were going. And that level of constraint was just not [sic], it didn't do good things for me. And here it's that they trust that you will be on time to teach your class, and that you are using your preps to prep for those classes. We don't have to sign in and out, they know that we are here, and they know that we put in tons of extra other time doing other stuff. You know, so it's a mutual respect (P#7, Interview, 2016).

The data collected on teacher perceptions at ULS suggest that the administration at ULS fosters such a climate where teachers feel trusted, respected, supported, and valued. Although there was not consensus on this, 92% of the teachers interviewed expressed the feeling that administration views them as professionals.

Professionalism: Who decides?

During the individual and focus group interviews, teachers discussed and pondered both where their conceptions of professionalism come from, and who ultimately decides what professionalism in teaching means. During the interviews teachers negotiated within themselves, or as a group, who decides what professionalism in teaching means. It was question that many of

the teachers expressed having never considered. Many of the initial responses pointed to the Hawai‘i Teachers Standards Board, as they are the group that regulates the requirements for teacher licensure. Teachers also referenced their teacher preparation programs at colleges of education. Some teachers even recalled having a course specifically on teacher professionalism, although very few teachers recalled content from that course. Those who did recalled the emphasis of professionalism on being organized and prepared, communication with parents and students, and professional attire. Some teachers pointed to the government at both the Federal and state level. One teacher stated, “I think at the end of the day who decides professionalism right now, in the broadest scope of the term, is the government. Particularly, in terms of my being effective and how that language is passed down” (P#5, Interview, 2016). However, after some time to deliberate and talk through their ideas, all the teachers who participated in the individual interview or focus group came to the conclusion that the meaning of professionalism is either up to the individual, or is negotiated within a school environment amongst administration and all teachers teaching in that context, or some combination of the two. One teacher explained,

> I feel like ultimately it's the individual…Because it's a term that's really [sic], if you ask them (teachers) what it is, everyone's going to give you a different answer. So it's really subjective. I guess there is so many different ways of looking at it, and I guess definitions you can have. I mean everyone has their own. I guess I would say the individual teacher decides what professionalism is and what it means to them, and how it's going to affect their practice… Everyone has different values so I guess it would be the individual teacher that I feel should be the one deciding what teacher professionalism is. But, of course if there's someone who's totally way off base, and we’re like ‘wow, that's bad’, I guess in that

> case, well I don't know what happens then. I guess it's a group, as a larger group we could discuss it and talk about it and have at least some common, some kind of commonalities [sic]. We cannot all just be on our own because we're not working together in a school community. So maybe both individual teachers have their own definition and ideas and standards in terms of what they think your professionalism is, but also as a larger group… Yes, individual and the collective. We don't necessarily have to agree, we don't always have to agree, but I think it is important to hear other people's ideas of professionalism, and how they embody what they feel, and what it's (professionalism) all about (P#6, Interview, 2016).

Teachers also expressed concerns over anyone else outside of the local context dictating what professionalism means. One teacher explained that she was not advocating that education is the "Wild West", and a baseline for standards and expectations is necessary such that, "A kid here should get the same level of education as a kid in Iowa" (P#5, Interview, 2016). However, in so far as day-to-day teaching practice and matters of the curriculum should be left up to the community and individual teachers who comprise that community. "I don't know about a legislator who has never been in my classroom, or has never met my kids, is it fair they decide the best way I teach my kids?" (P#5, Interview, 2016). This teacher also specifically referenced Hawai'ian Language Immersion schools being public schools, or public charter schools and having to be subjected to some of the same requirements as other schools across the country.

> Professionalism for them (Hawai'ian Language Immersion) is going to look so different, because there is the aspect of culture that they are passing on. I don't think I should have a right to say what professionalism looks like to them, and I don't think the legislature that

> has no knowledge about that should get to decide. I think it should be more like the school or community [sic] (P#5, Interview, 2016).

This is an important aspect of teachers' professionalism that cannot and should not be overlooked. This notion of professionalism gets back to Fullan's (2007) idea that for meaningful change in a school to take place, teachers must find meaning in it for themselves. Teachers who are working on the front lines of teaching every day know their students, know their school, and know their community. Through experience they develop the knowledge to better respond to the needs of the students, school, and community. They recognize themselves as having this specialized, localized knowledge. So when decisions are made far from their classrooms about their classrooms and about their students, teachers are skeptical. Particularly, when what is being suggested seems counter to the best interest of their students, school, and community and counter to the core beliefs of professionalism that the teacher holds.

> Who decides? I think it's the teachers. It's got to come from the teachers because I think when you have a top down or sideways imposition it's never [sic]… Yes, some teachers are going to be able to meet those expectations and act professionally in that way. But, if it is not a core belief of those professionals, then it's not going to work. So I'd like to think it came from me. It came from me being a teacher and imposing that on myself because I saw what other good teachers were doing, and I was learning from other good teachers. So I'd like to think maybe that's the idea that is what professionalism is really, it comes from us as teachers. More so than anything, I think we value it more if it came from us than an administrator, or an evaluation system telling us what should be professionalism (P#4, Interview, 2016).

Another teacher explained,

> But, I really do think it's more of something that has to come from you individually. Because if you don't really believe in it, or feel that it's important, then you're not going to do it, and it's not going to be important. And I guess that's why I think it's more valuable individually, or in the collective because these (external) agencies, [sic] what do they know? I guess I would just take what they say for what it is. It's nice to know what other people think and all that, and be able to consider those, but I really do think it needs to come from you as a person and, like I said, it's different for everyone (P#6, Interview, 2016).

Societal Perceptions of Teacher Professionalism

In both the survey and the interviews teachers brought up how they believe society perceives teaching as a profession, and therefore teachers as professionals. On both the survey and in the interviews, teachers expressed that, increasingly, society does not understand the nature of teacher's work or trust teachers as professionals with the ability to exercise professional judgement in the classroom. One teacher wrote that teachers are, "…no longer regarded and respected" and they are consequently "…questioned and distrusted" (P#10, Survey, 2016). One teacher discussed how he/she felt societal perceptions of teacher professionalism impacts teachers' professional identity. This teacher wrote,

> The way we (teachers) create identity is two-fold. One, as you reflect and ask yourself who am I? …What do you think is professional personally? But the other part of identity is, how do other people treat you as a result of the way that they perceive you? That also, and your self-worth, and the way you see yourself [sic]. And so I think for teachers, we are less likely to view or care about professionalism at our job when all of the external factors tell us that our job is not professional. When we are treated, or essentially called glorified

> babysitters, or people act like our job isn't that hard [sic]. Oh, 'you just babysit kids like that's your job, isn't that fun?' I think the longer that we hear that perception, the harder it is to break out of that, and the harder it is to get the desire to better your practice. If I'm just hearing all the time that my job is not really a job, I am not going to be motivated to go out and get better at it (P#5, Interview, 2016).

This finding contributes to the idea that professionalism is embedded within the larger context of professionalism and discourse on professionalism. Although it is unclear to what extent, it is clear from this study that societal perceptions of teacher professionalism trickle into how teachers think and perceive the profession and professionalism. Even in schools like charter schools that have more autonomy from traditional educational organizations, the societal context and perception contributes to teachers' conceptions of professionalism.

Summary of Additional Findings from ULS

After a thorough analysis, the data from ULS revealed that teacher perceptions of professionalism at ULS could be categorized into two overarching themes. The first, "basics of teacher professionalism," are the bare minimum professional aspects of the teaching profession that, if you are teacher, should be carried out. In other words, the bare minimum implies the explicit tasks necessary for completing one's job. For example, knowing one's content area, pedagogy, proving timely feedback on assessment, communicating with students, parents, colleagues, and showing up to work on time every day. However, while the basics of teacher professionalism for many of the teachers interviewed were important, carrying them out did not necessarily imply that a teacher was exhibiting professionalism. The data suggests that for the teachers at ULS, professionalism in teaching goes beyond simply doing the basics of one's job, or demonstrating the basic aspects of teacher professionalism. This led to the second overarching

theme, “beyond the basics of teacher professionalism”. For the teachers at ULS, to truly demonstrate professionalism in teaching, a growth mindset and willingness to continue learning for the betterment of one’s practice, establishing collaborative relationships with colleagues, and experimentation in the classroom as a means to new discoveries are required. For the teachers at ULS, some or all of the beyond the basics aspects in combination with the basics are necessary for a teacher to be considered a professional in teaching. The findings also revealed that both the basics and the beyond the basics aspects of teacher professionalism are driven by the best interest and needs of the students.

In their discussions of teacher professionalism, the teachers also shared that in order for teachers to be professionals according to their description of the term, they require a high degree of trust, granted freedoms, and teacher agency. Without trust, freedom, and agency, a teacher’s ability to experiment, collaborate, and grow in his or her practice is severely minimized. Additionally, teachers at ULS articulated that it is trust, freedom and agency that provide them with a greater sense of professionalism. The teachers at ULS explained that trust, freedom, and agency are not guaranteed, but must be granted and supported by administration. This finding is interesting in light of another finding from this study in which teachers suggested that they are the ones of who decide what professionalism in teaching means, either collectively, or individually. This suggests that teachers feel they have control over how they perceive professionalism, but they can also be constrained by the contexts and structures in which they teach. These constraints can limit their ability to enact professionalism in ways consistent with how they perceive it individually, or how they collectively negotiate teacher professionalism within the local context.

Although the focus of this study pertained to teachers' own sense of professionalism, four teachers in the study had difficulty separating discussions regarding their own perceptions from their perceived perception that society holds of teachers and, consequently, teacher professionalism. It is worth noting, therefore, how teachers themselves describe their sense of professionalism in terms of how society views the profession, and consequently, teachers as professionals. This suggests that although the teachers feel they decide what professionalism in teaching means, the concept of professionalism for teachers is still embedded in the larger discourse on professionalism.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings from the University Laboratory School provide important insights into how teachers within a particular school context perceive teacher professionalism. The overall findings suggest that, for teachers at ULS professionalism in teaching implies beyond simply doing one's job. While these findings shed light on the substance of teacher professionalism as perceived by teachers, the findings also provide insight on the nature of professionalism and how it functions. Specifically, the findings from ULS suggest that it is the care and commitment for students on the part of the teacher that drives teacher professionalism. With the care and commitment driving professionalism, the teachers, therefore, decide for themselves the meaning of teacher professionalism. However, while the teachers feel that they decide the meaning of teacher professionalism, they recognize that their ability to enact their perceptions of professionalism is, to a degree, dependent on teacher autonomy. Yet, as indicated by the data from the teachers at ULS, autonomy is an aspect of professionalism that is given, or granted by the leadership within the school context. These findings from ULS, coupled with both findings from other studies in the literature, as well as Evans (2008) theoretical model for professionalism suggest that teacher professionalism is not isolated, or stripped from context, rather teacher professionalism is situated within the multiple contexts that surround the professional lives of teachers. These insights will be further discussed in the sections below.

The Heart of Professionalism

As discussed in Chapter 5 in the section reporting on responsibility, the findings from the University Laboratory School suggest that at the heart of professionalism is the teacher's commitment, care, and responsibility for the student. That is, professional responsibility goes

beyond the day-to-day responsibilities necessary in teaching, and includes intention and enactment of those responsibilities being in the best interest of the students. Professional responsibility, according to the teachers at ULS, implies that every decision and action made by the teacher is done so with care and commitment to the needs of the student being placed first. It is this commitment that drives all the aspects of teacher professionalism. "So I do think that every single thing we do…it always boils down to the student, and student learning, and supporting the students" (P#9, Interview, 2016).

This idea of commitment and care for students as the heart of professionalism is consistent with traditional conceptions of professionalism where the purpose of the profession was conceptualized in terms of its role and significance to society (Brint, 1994). Brint (1994) argues that the basis of professionalism has shifted from the classical, moral dimensions of professionalism, "social trustee professionalism" to one that is based in the expertise of knowledge. This shift has emerged over time as a market economy ideology (Brint, 1994) and has taken hold in professions. Emphasis on technical expertise, efficiency, and profit has replaced the altruistic dimensions formally rooted in professions. Solbrekke and Englund (2011) argue that, "There is a stronger political emphasis on today on ensuring innovation and economic growth in society than on the moral and social dimensions of work…" (p. 850). Accompanying this emphasis are systems of "new public management" (Solbrekke & Englund, 2011) where responsibility in decision making is left to the local level, however is often accompanied by quality standards established by politicians. To ensure the quality of the public good, substantial oversight and accountability are required (Solbrekke & Englund, 2011). In addition to the quality of the public good, in a market ideology efficiency in terms of cost effectiveness is also evaluated. However, Solbrekke & Englund (2011) argue that in this context of quality control

and accountability, "…there is little room to ask the necessary questions: for what purpose and for whom are the services effective?" (p. 850). These questions are critical for the teachers, like those at ULS, whose concern for the students is at the heart of all they do in their classrooms. When these questions are neglected it creates tension between what teachers are being asked to do, and what they feel they should do according to their conceptions of professionalism. For example, "For teachers, the pressure to produce best results on international comparative tests may conflict with the values of inclusion, equivalence, and participation for all students in education" (Solbrekke & Englund, 2011, p. 853). One teacher in this study shared perceptions of the impact of the high-stakes accountability movement on teacher professionalism and teaching. This teacher wrote,

> I think that teacher professionalism has changed over time as society changes. With teachers being measured by student test scores, the development of the student becomes secondary when it should be the primary goal. If students are not getting the scores that are expected, teachers are viewed as not doing their job. All of the innovation and dedication of each teacher gets devalued in that instant. This affects how teachers interact with students, parents, and administration. It can become more adversarial as teachers start to feel more defensive about what they are doing (P#16, Survey, 2016).

The above excerpt from one teacher's survey highlights what happens when requirements, or mandates for teachers is set against what teachers believe they should be doing in the best interest of their students. This creates a paradox for teachers, in which they must ask if professionalism is compliance, or professionalism is acting in the best interest of the students, even if that goes against what they are being told they are required to do. While this can be a frustrating experience for teachers, as suggested by previous studies (Nichols & Berliner, 2005;

Valli & Buese, 2007) conducted on NCLB (2001) and its subsequent impact on teaching, the teachers at ULS articulated that it's the teachers who decide the meaning of teacher professionalism. However, many of the teachers recognize that there are other stakeholders in education who also try to define professionalism for teachers. One teacher explained, "But, I really do think it's more of something that has to come from you individually. Because if you don't really believe in it, then you are not going to do it, and it's not going to be important" (P#6, Interview, 2016). This again speaks to the idea that professionalism is situated within multiple education contexts, and also speaks to the dynamics that exist between teacher perceptions of professionalism, and demanded forms of professionalism. If teachers encounter mandates that they don't value, in terms of professionalism, they will not follow it. Or, at the very least they may not follow it in the way it was intended.

Autonomy is Essential for Professionalism

As articulated by the conceptual framework for this study, autonomy, or the freedom for teachers to exercise professional judgement is a core tenet of the teaching profession. It is on the basis of professional autonomy that professions are often distinguished from other professions (Hoyle & Wallace, 2009). The findings from the teachers at ULS suggest that autonomy is one of the four key characteristics of a profession that did not have both basic and beyond the basics aspects. While it is plausible to argue that there are varying degrees of autonomy, the findings from ULS suggest that autonomy is either present, or it is not. Furthermore, autonomy, as defined by the teachers at ULS, is essential for teachers to be able to enact their perceptions of professionalism. While it is the commitment and care for students that drives professionalism, it is autonomy that provides teachers the space and opportunity to act in accordance with those best interests. Autonomy provides teachers the space to innovate, experiment, learn, grow, and

ultimately, according to the teachers at ULS, provide meaningful instruction and learning experiences for the students.

However, today we see an erosion of professional autonomy in teaching that has occurred as a direct result of the NCLB era and the subsequent climate of high-stakes accountability, to the extent that sociologists have sometimes referred to teaching as a "semi-profession," because it is situated in such a highly bureaucratic context (Brint & Teele, 2005). Yet, the literature suggests that this should not be the case. In their large-scale study of teachers' professionalism in the NCLB era, Brint & Teele (2005) found that "…when the focus shifts to the classroom, it is clear that high-level teaching requires high-level skills and professional judgements teachers mentioned as a part of their professional practice in the pre-NCLB classroom" (p.148). Solbrekke & Englund (2011) argue that by its very definition, responsibility, or professional responsibility implies proactive action where teachers can make decisions based on their experience and specialized knowledge in the field. They go on to argue that on the other hand, accountability, or professional accountability implies a reactive action, where teachers justify and report their decisions in the form of reporting and measureable results. However, to allow teachers to be proactive requires trust between the administrative leadership and teachers. Tschannen-Moran (2009) argues that autonomy relies heavily on both administrative trust, as well as societal trust of teachers as professionals, who possess the ability to exercise professional judgement on a situational basis. Solbrekke & Englund (2011) describe this trust as a mutual trust between the professional agent and the one for which the professional agent is taking responsibility. This kind of trust implies that the teacher is qualified to make decisions as circumstances and dilemmas arise, and offers freedom to make those decisions as necessary.

The teachers at ULS argue that it is this trust that gives them the sense of being treated like a professional. That is, trust is allowing teachers to have the autonomy to make professional judgements and decisions, thereby having the freedom to enact their perceptions of professionalism. Alternatively, distrust of teachers results in the restriction of autonomy and may contribute negatively to a teacher's sense of professionalism, and may ultimately result in teachers not enacting professionalism. A recent example would include the 2012 teacher protests that took place in Hawai'i, where public school teachers were protesting by only working "to the rules". Teachers in Hawai'i had been working for over a year without a negotiated contract and wanted more fair compensation, as well as an end to teacher performance pay based on student test scores. Because public school teachers are only contractually required to work from 8:00am to 3:00pm, teachers who participated in the "work to the rule" protests would stop all work at the end of their contract hours (Strauss, 2012). This meant that all the additional work teachers must perform on a daily basis such as, grading, planning, IEP paperwork, meetings, chaperoning, etc. would either be completed by 3:00pm, or would have to wait until the next day at 8:00am. In a profession that requires much more than the bare minimum, teachers who do not feel trusted by either local administration or the state may only end up giving the bare minimum.

The findings from ULS can be articulated within Hoyle's (1975) description of two models for teacher professionalism. To clarify, in his work Hoyle (1975) uses the term professionality to discuss what this paper refers to as professionalism or professionality, and Hoyle (1975) uses the term professionalism to describe what this paper refers to as professionalization, or the status-related aspects of the profession. This paper adopts Evans (2008) notion that professionality, or individual professionalism is specific to an individual, while professionalism is the collective of professionality (Evans, 2008); however, throughout the

paper the two words have been used interchangeably because professionalism is used by teachers in their descriptions of individual professionalism, whereas professionality is a term only used in the literature. Hoyle describes his two models as restricted and extended. According to Hoyle (1975), restricted professionalism (or, professionality) implies that the teacher values the day-to-day aspects of teaching more and extended professionalism implies a much deeper and wider vision of education and all that teaching involves. Evans (2008) describes Hoyle's (1975) two models as a falling on a continuum, with restricted at one end and extended on the other. In other words, the basic aspects of professionalism that emerged from the findings at ULS would fall on the restricted end of the professionalism continuum, and the beyond the basic aspects on the extended. An individual's location on the continuum describes the professionality orientation (Evans, 2008) of the individual, or the professionalism orientation of a collective of teachers at a school site. Based on the findings from ULS, I argue that it is the surrounding context that contributes to teacher autonomy, and its teacher autonomy that influenecs the location of a teacher, or collective group of teachers on the professionalism continuum. Greater autonomy contributes to and allows for the aspects of extended professionalism to be enacted, whereas less teacher autonomy constrains the teacher's ability to go beyond the basics of professionalism, thereby restricting professionalism and minimizing it to the basic aspects. Figure 1 depicts the professionalism continuum adapted from the work of Hoyle (1975) and Evans (2008), and discussed in terms of the findings from this study.

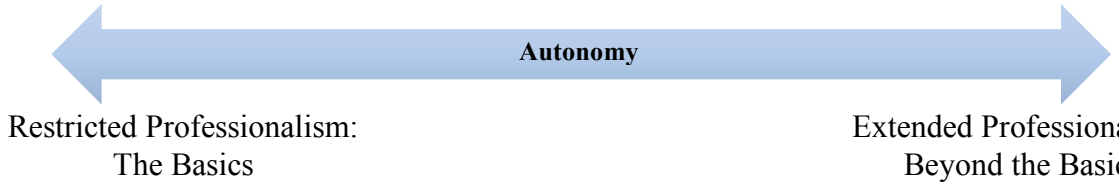

Figure 1: Professionalism continuum.

The ULS Context for Professionalism

If the ability for teachers to enact their versions of professionalism is dependent on trust, then that trust must come, in part, from school leadership. The findings from this study suggest that the administration at ULS fosters, what Tschannen-Moran (2009) refers to as a professional orientation. In her study on fostering teacher professionalism in schools, Tschannen-Moran (2009) differentiates between two of the dominating orientations of school leaders, a professional orientation and bureaucratic. A bureaucratic orientation is highly centralized and standardized, and views the teacher as problematic and in need of corrective action. On the other hand, a professional orientation views the teacher as skilled and intelligent and functions in an environment where control is shared and rules are flexible. The former implies distrust of teachers on the part of the leadership, whereas the latter implies trust (Tschannen-Moran, 2009). Tschannen-Moran (2009) argues that leaders who adopt a bureaucratic orientation emphasize close supervision, and apply strict rules and policies with which teachers must comply. This type of orientation results in closed communication, where teachers are fearful to communicate with administration, a sense of micromanagement where teachers become reliant on school leaders, excessive rules with which teachers may feel less likely to comply, and rigidity where teachers are afraid to try new ideas and take safe risks in their practice (Tschannen-Moran, 2009). Findings from her study suggest that teachers demonstrate greater professionalism in school

environments where the leaders adopt a professional orientation and when trust is pervasive throughout the school structures. Specifically, teachers are more likely to demonstrate commitment to the profession and go beyond the bare minimum in meeting their students' needs in schools that demonstrated a professional orientation and fostered an environment of trust. Schools that had adopted more bureaucratic structures found that teachers were actually less likely to go beyond the bare minimum (Tschannen-Moran, 2009). This implies that for teachers to enact their conceptions of professionalism, the orientation of school leaders must be one that is professionally orientated. This does not mean, however, that bureaucratic structures in schools are to be eliminated; rather, it implies that if the bureaucratic structures should not be the only structure, or that bureaucratic structures should not be maximized at the expense of fostering an environment of trust. Relying too heavily on bureaucratic structures constrains the school and educator's ability to respond and adapt to the rapid changes in education and the needs to students (Tschannen-Moran, 2009). This is also consistent with the work of Hoyle & Wallace (2009), in which they argue that,

> Managerialism exhibits a preference for pre-determined structures according to which work is organized. Professionalism is to an important degree emergent from practice. Its emergence is highly depended on practitioner autonomy – a key component to the traditional idea of profession – which temperate leaders need to foster (p. 212).

The data collected on teacher perceptions at ULS suggest that the administration at ULS fosters such a climate where teachers feel trusted, respected, supported, and valued. Although there was not consensus on this, 92% of the teachers interviewed expressed the feeling that administration views them as professionals. This is not to say that there are not bureaucratic structures in place

at ULS, but the general proclivity of the administration is professional and seeks to enhance the professionalism of the teachers.

Teacher Research

It is worth noting that one of the professional structures that is present at ULS, and was frequently discussed by the teachers in this study, is teacher research. As discussed in Chapter 4, this stems from the long-standing history of ULS as a site for educational research and innovation through its relationship with the Curriculum Research & Development Group. Five of the ULS teachers in this study cited research as being an important professional structure within the school and view research as an aspect of professionalism. Teachers at ULS are considered by both administration and amongst themselves as teacher-researchers. Teachers are encouraged to experiment and innovate in the classroom as a means of bettering one's practice, as well as to contribute to the field of education writ large. Additionally, teachers at ULS are provided with the opportunity to propose a more formal research study at the school as a part of their full-time workload. Teachers considered the innovate and experimentation aspect of professionalism as a way to contribute to their continued learning, betterment of their practice, and understanding of their students. In a recent study, Brenner, Bianchini, and Dwyer (2016) used teacher research as a form of professional development for teachers with a focus on equity in science and mathematics classes. The authors found that, through the study, teachers came to see themselves as both teachers and researchers, they became more active and reflective within the school community, and developed new insights into the needs of students, and willingly used new instructional strategies (Brenner, Bianchini, and Dwyer, 2016). While there are numerous benefits to teacher research, one teacher at ULS described the intrinsic value that research holds.

> For me some of that goes back to that idea of bettering my practice. It's hard because, I don't know, maybe in ten years I'll be jaded. I'll say, 'Don't talk to me, this is my curriculum, this is what I'm doing every day.' I don't want to be that teacher though. I think the concept of research, the reason why I think it's valuable is because it allows teachers to feel like they can add something new to the profession. There are still things to add. The fact that narrative writing has barely been researched, and how we teach kids to read and write, is a big blind spot in educational research. I doubt that we are the first people to think that, but I don't think any institutions give teachers the time and the space to actually research it. Or to actually try it, and actually read up about it and get paid to do it…So when we do research we provide teachers with incentive to better their practice, to learn new things, and to maybe even add new ideas to the profession. But, intrinsically we send the message that there's new things for you to add; teaching is a living profession. There is no perfect way to teach yet. What new research can you add? What voice can you add? And I think that's really lost in teaching, especially. I think we assume this is what a good classroom looks like, and it's a very obedient space. I don't get the opportunity to intrinsically get the message that my voice matters (P#5, Interview, 2016).

When teachers innovate and experiment in the classroom, not only are they learning to better their practice, but they are given voice; the acknowledgement that their experience, their ideas, and their classroom matters to the field of education writ large. Fueyo and Koorland (1997) describe the teacher as researcher as being synonymous with professionalism.

> Teachers as researchers observe and analyze plans and actions and their subsequent impact on the students they teacher. By understanding both their own and their students' classroom behaviors, teachers make informed decisions about what to change and what not to change.

> They can and do solve their own problems. They link prior knowledge to new information. Risk takers, they accept failures as learning experiences…They implement change. (Fueyo & Koorland, 1997)

However, in a survey conducted by Koorland (1992), some teachers reported that research is not one of their responsibilities. In fact, many teachers did not see the connection between teaching and research and felt research was an activity engaged in within the university arena (Koorland, 1992). In the same survey, teachers reported that if they conducted research and that led to modifications or deviations from the prescribed curriculum or methods within a school site, they felt they would be seen by administration as oppositional (Koorland, 1992).

> They feared that their standing in their school, or school system would be compromised. Feeling out of line on the part of the teachers reflects a limited regard toward development of innovative practice and underscores self-perception as teacher as laborer, not a professional. (Fueyo & Koorland, 1997)

Arguably, this self-perception still exists in the post-No Child Left Behind era, and is quite possibly exaggerated by the high emphasis placed on student achievement and standardized assessments, which has resulted in the narrowing of the curriculum and placing constraints on teachers' time (Nichols & Berliner, 2005). At ULS, however, it is a part of the school history, current culture, and perception of teachers held by the administration, as well as faculty, that teacher-research is an important aspect of professionalism in teaching and exists as a professional structure built into the school context.

The Multiple Contexts of Teacher Professionalism

Drawing from Evans (2008) theoretical model of professionalism, existing literature on teachers' conceptualizations of professionalism, and the findings from the sample in this study,

Figure 2 depicts a structural representation of the multiple contexts of professionalism in teaching. Beginning from the outermost circle is the macro-level context of professionalism. This is primarily in the form of demanded professionalism, although could also be in the form of prescribed professionalism, and is comprised of those entities, organizations, and stakeholders that seek to determine the nature and substance of professionalism. These include, but are not limited to, the Federal Department of Education, professional organizations in teaching, standards boards, colleges of education, and teachers' unions. These organizations are continuously bombarding schools and educators with their own conceptions of professionalism in teaching. And while many of those conceptions consider the interests of students, they often are also accompanied by competing agenda's and priorities. For example, while I would argue that teachers' unions consider the best interest of students, their primarily role and function is to protect the interest of teachers and at time, the two priorities may be contradictory. Language from these entities trickles down from macro-level discourse to the micro-level context of districts, individual schools, and ultimately teachers and students. Depending on the orientation of the schools, they can choose to adopt the prescriptive policies of demanded professionalism, or adapt as necessary for the needs of the school. Therefore, individual school sites can act as a buffer from demanded professionalism. Districts and schools which adopt demanded forms of professionalism inherently constrain the opportunity for teachers to negotiate the terms of professionalism within their context, and the prescriptive language of demanded professionalism interacts directly with both the collective terms of professionalism, or professionalities (Evans, 2008), as well as teachers' enacted professionalism. Although it is also not unimaginable that collectively teachers may buffer themselves from prescriptive regulations for practice at the school level. If schools choose to buffer teachers from demanded professionalism and limit the

prescriptive terms for curriculum and best practice, opportunities for teachers to enact their perceptions of professionalism and negotiate their conceptualizations amongst each other are present. Regardless of the orientation adopted by the school site, at the center of teaching are the moral dimensions, or altruistic nature of the teaching profession. Therefore, if prescriptive forms of demanded professionalism are able to trickle from top-down to the individual teacher, tension may be created between the prescriptive forms of professionalism and the teachers' enacted professionalism rooted in the care and concern foremost for their students. This is not to suggest that all forms of demanded professionalism will inevitably run counter to teachers' enacted professionalism. However, findings from this study suggest that as long as the demanded forms of professionalism subject teachers and consequently their students into a "one size fits all" education, tension will be inevitable. The nature of professionalism within the school site is continuously being enacted and negotiated amongst the teachers and then also with administration within that school. The extent and quality of the characteristics of professionalism articulated within the conceptual framework and findings of this study are the substance of such negotiations amongst teachers and administration, and are ultimately enacted by individual teachers.

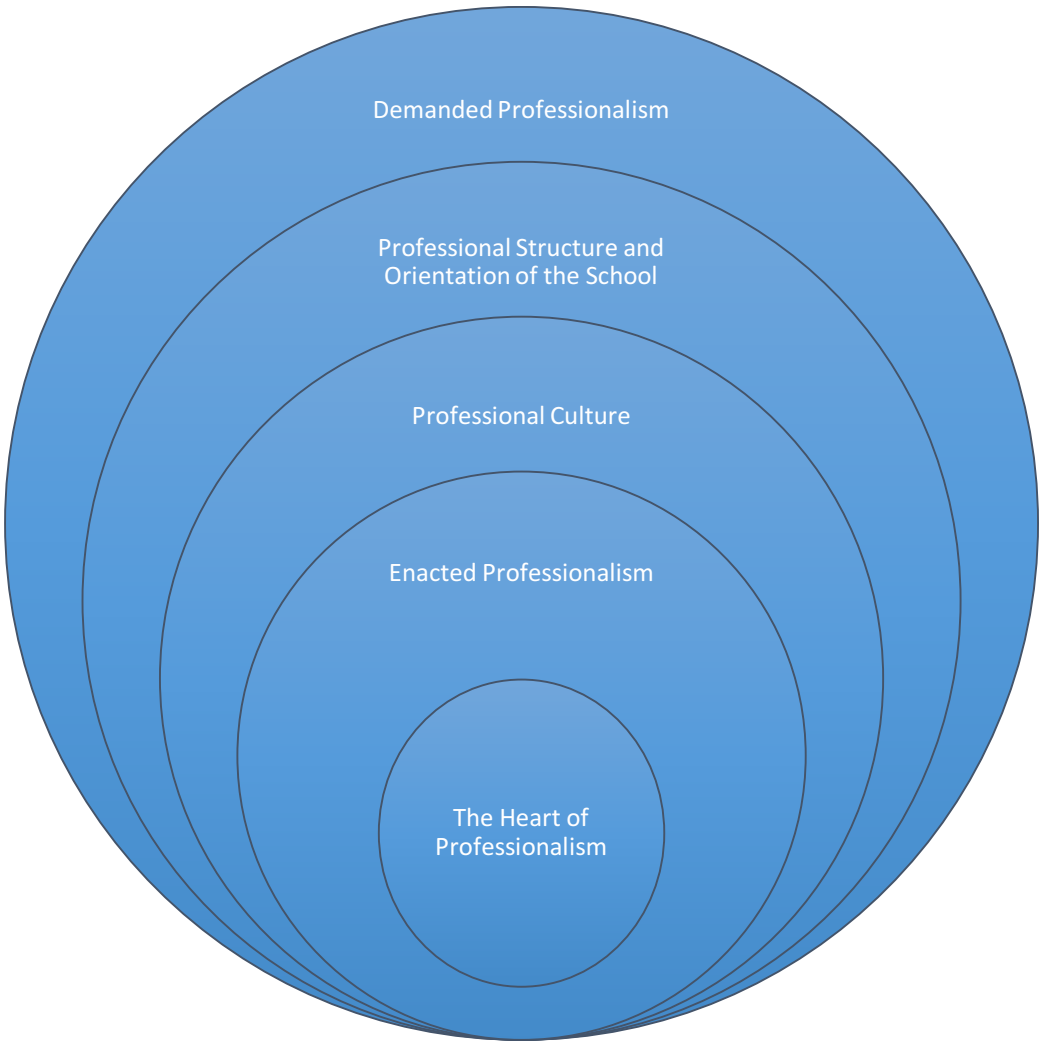

Figure 2: The multiple contexts of teacher professionalism.

The Dynamics within the Multiple Contexts of Professionalism

Drawing on the ideas expressed in the section above, it is clear that the embedded contexts of teacher professionalism are not static, rather they are dynamic in that there is constant interaction and negotiation across the contexts. In the diagram below (figure 3), the black arrows represent demanded versions professionalism from those within the macro-discourse on professionalism. Those demanded forms of professionalism manifest into policies and programs

that are directed toward individual school sites. At the school administrative level those policies are either rejected (although depending on where the directive is coming from, a total rejection seems unlikely), adopted, or adapted. The black arrow entering the professional structure circle represents the adoption of a directive, while the orange arrow represents an adaptation. It is plausible to imagine that the adaptations could come from the administration, or be generated in relation to the professional culture. The case of ULS provides an example of this idea. Since ULS is a charter school, they are still subject to the measures of accountability as directed by the State. However, they are granted greater autonomy in determining the means for achievement. Those means are determined through collaboration of both administration and educators and are representative of the professional culture at the school.

Once the demanded forms of professionalism have filtered through the school level and into the professional culture, the demanded forms of professionalism, either in adopted or adapted form, interact with the individual teachers' enacted professionalism. As articulated by Evans (2008) in her model for professionalism, it is plausible to assume that while an individual's professionalism, or professionality influences the professional culture, an individual's professionalism is also in turn influenced by the professional culture. That is, the relationship between enacted professionalism and professional culture is not unidirectional, rather it is an iterative process thereby continuously shaping both. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the findings from ULS suggest that the driver of enacted professionalism is the teacher's commitment and care for the best interest of the students. This care and commitment I refer to as the heart of professionalism. From the diagram we can see the, at times, competing forces between the heart of professionalism (red arrow) and the directives that have been filtered through from above (black and orange arrow). When the two are in harmonious effort the

iterative process continues seamlessly. However, when the heart of professionalism is set against what is coming down from above, tension can be experienced within both the enacted professionalism and professional culture circles. According to the literature, in the era of high-stakes accountability it is the latter that appears to be occurring.

The diagram below allows for a better understanding on the nature of teacher professionalism, but also provides new insight on how professionalism functions and how the multiple forms of professionalism, as developed in model from Evans (2008), interact, and specifically how they interact in relation to the heart of professionalism, professional culture, and the professional orientation of school leadership.

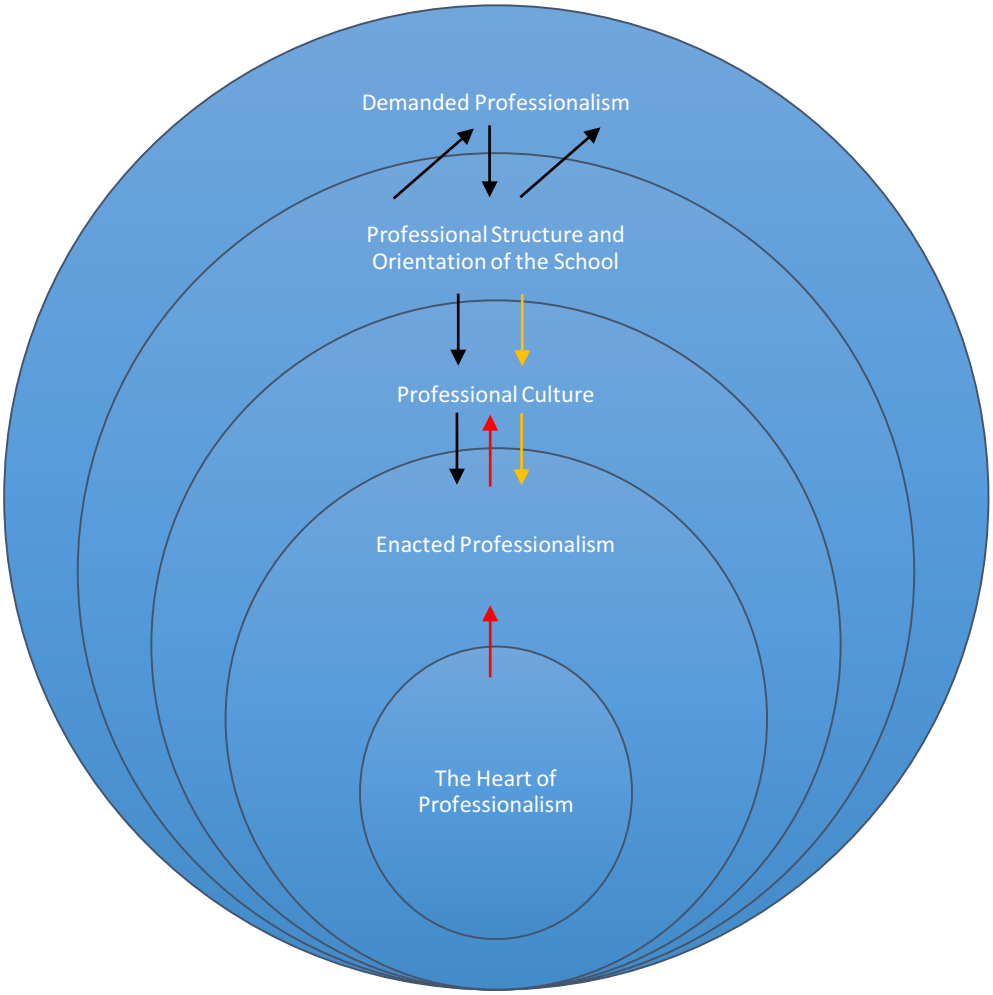

Figure 3: The dynamics within the multiple contexts of teacher professionalism.

The Charter School Context for Professionalism

As discussed in Chapter 4, the charter school movement emerged from the larger political context emphasizing both systemic reform of standards as well as assessment and a push for decentralization and deregulation with the hope that increased competition would enhance the quality of public education. Charter schools are not free from accountability and transparency, yet charter schools are granted greater flexibility in exchange for student outcomes. In theory, charter schools would serve as models for innovation, provide flexibility for progressive agendas to meet the needs of various communities and diverse populations of students, and enhance the quality of public schools through competition and collaboration.

Charter schools: A laboratory model for public schools. As discussed in Chapter 4, the University Laboratory School served throughout the twentieth century as both a normal school for teachers, and then a laboratory school for the purpose of curriculum research and development in partnership with its associated university. Over the course of the last century traditional laboratory schools have both flourished and perished under the changing educational climate in America. In the mid-1960s the International Association of Laboratory Schools (IALS) had, at its highest, 200 school members as opposed to about 60 today. Many of the schools either closed down, and few became tuition-based private schools (Sparks, 2015). Even the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools, one of the first and more famous laboratory school sites started by John Dewey in the late 1890s, fell victim to budget cuts in the 1990s and was forced to break from the university. The school, still located on the university campus, occasionally works jointly with the university for research, but now looks very different than it did in its earlier days (Sparks, 2015). Laboratory schools served a unique purpose or 'niche' in American education. Although laboratory schools in their traditional sense may no longer be able

to exist and serve education in the same way, charter schools offer an alternative model, and provide the flexibility to function similarly despite their ties to government. Charter schools, like earlier laboratory schools can act as a laboratory site for research, pilot ideas for reform, and provide a stronger link between research and practice.

Charter schools as a university laboratory. Charter schools can provide a laboratory for education researchers, in the same way that a chemistry or physics laboratory is to a chemist or physicist; laboratory schools are spaces where academic researchers and practitioners can work together in ideal conditions to explore issues and pose solutions to existing conditions in education. While not ideal, even charter school form laboratory schools are not subject to the many regulations and constraints placed on regular public schools. This increased autonomy allows for creativity, innovation, and risk-taking in ways that public schools do not possess. Practicing in schools where creativity and risk-taking are not only present, but encouraged helps continue the stimulation of new ideas for research. Laboratory schools can live on the cutting edge, pushing the frontiers of education. Amani Reed, the head of the School at Colombia, saw the potential of laboratory schools as a site for university faculty research when he started the School at Colombia in 2003. Although the school is an independent school and is not directly affiliated with Colombia University, it maintains the laboratory spirit (Sparks, 2015).

Charter schools as a resource for educational reform. Little of the national discourse on educational reform has discussed the role of charter schools as central to educational reform. Charter schools, like earlier laboratory schools, are able to respond quickly to changes in education and trial new programs before widespread policies are established and mandated into public schools. Charter schools can help develop implementation strategies for new programs, helping develop effective strategies for turning policy into practice. This feature could be

beneficial at the DOE level, amidst floundering policy initiatives that have occurred through lack of implementation support and effective and meaningful strategies for classroom practice. Additionally, charter schools like ULS can enroll student demographics that are representative of a cross-section of the state demographics. Researchers and policy-makers alike could better observe the effects of policies and programs on the local context, and make adjustments according to findings from a charter school pilot study. The University Laboratory School in Hawai‘i recently served as the primary pilot and demonstration site for the Department of Education's statewide technology implementation and program. The technology program was first developed at the University Laboratory School and then scaled up for statewide implementation in public schools.

Charter schools as a bridge between research and practice. Charter schools can also provide a bridge between academic research and educational practice in public schools, by providing public school teachers with a demonstration site where current educational innovation and research in practice can be observed. However, this bridge is a two-way street in that charter school practitioners can help inspire and fuel research ideas to researchers at the university level. P.K. Yonge School, a laboratory school that was affiliated with the University of Florida's college of education for many years during the twentieth century is an example. When money stopped flowing to the school through the university, in 1991 the Florida legislature established the school as an independent school of choice where the school would receive direct funding from the state, but in return the school would be subject to the state's measures of accountability. Despite the challenges faced by the school under this new governance structure, teachers at the school continue to conduct their own research and present findings from their studies at local conferences to university researchers (Sparks, 2015).

Criticisms of the charter school movement. Despite the charter school movement being one of the fastest growing educational movements of the 1990s and early 2000s, charter schools have been met with mixed reviews. According to the ULCA Charter School study of seventeen charter schools in California, there is little evidence that supports the claim that charter schools (in a broad sense) have increased student achievement (Wells, 2002). Additionally, there is little evidence that charter schools are held to any greater accountability than regular public schools. Wells (2002) found that this is because charter-granting agencies are not sure how to hold the schools accountable to their "charter" and that schools are often vague regarding to what they are accountable. Hill et al. (2001) found that "…charter school authorizers, particularly conventional school district offices, are struggling to learn how to relate to schools on the basis of performance rather than compliance" (p.12). Another criticism of charter schools pertains to challenges surrounding the issue of equity. Firstly, charter schools do not all receive equal funding from the school districts and many are left to raise additional private funds to cover expenses (Slayton, 2002). While raising private funds for support is less problematic in more affluent areas, it greatly impacts that ability to start up and maintain charter schools in lower-income communities. In addition, data shows that charter schools have a tendency to be more segregated in terms of racial and social class than their public school counterparts (Wells, 2002). The last major finding out of the UCLA Charter School Study indicates that despite the greater autonomy teachers hold in charter schools, little evidence supports the claim that they are using their greater freedoms to explore methods of teaching and learning to enhance the teaching practice. That is, the charter school movement as a whole has amounted to little more than deregulatory reform (Wells, 2002). In their study of teachers' perspectives of charter school reform, Vasudeva and Grutzik (2002) found that although teachers in charter schools enjoyed the

autonomous aspect of their work, they remained tied to more traditional public education institutions, such as teacher unions. This finding revealed that despite the freedom from bureaucratic structures, charter school teachers were still influenced (although varied in extent) by the larger professional contexts. Drawing from Talbert and McLaughlin's (1992) discussion of the contexts that shape and influence teaching and teachers, Vasudeva and Grutzik (2002) discuss how teachers' professional lives, they find, are influenced by both local contexts and larger contexts for both public school teachers, and interestingly, charter school teachers as well.

These criticisms of the charter school movement as a whole are not insignificant and speak to the need for a closer look at charter school law and how it is enacted across and within the states. However, despite these criticisms, the idyllic, progressive agenda of the charter school movement is not lost. Charter schools still hold tremendous potential for enhancing education and educational opportunities for all. The charter school model provides more flexibility to school leadership and therefore, allows school leaders and administrators to have more of a professional orientation towards their teachers. This in turn allows teachers to negotiate and enact a professionalism that goes beyond the basics of the job, and provides opportunities for them to enact their perceptions of professionalism to the fullest extent.

Educational Reform

The systemic, educational reforms of the last few decades have utilized rhetoric of excellence in education, high quality teaching, and accountability on student achievement and improvement. Although seemingly devised to enhance the teaching profession as well as student achievement, these reforms also seemed to undermine teacher professionalism. What initially seemed like an opportunity for teachers to participate in the discourse on enhancing education through standards and assessment during the 1990s (McLaughlin, 2011), gave way to

prescriptive policies and high stakes assessments which resulted in teachers' frustration, narrowing of the curriculum, over emphasis on teaching to the test, and a loss of teacher autonomy. Many of the prescriptive measures aimed at enhancing the quality of education ran counter to the values and professionalism of teachers, resulting in teachers feeling as though professionalism is under attack (Brint & Teele, 2008). The model in Figure 3 depicts that various levels through which policy must filter prior to reaching classrooms. Teachers can either resist the demanded professionalism, choose to adopt, or choose to adapt. It is plausible to argue that as a result of these various options, many of these policies have had varying results when implemented in practice. This issue becomes even more complex when one considers the wide variety of contexts that exist in schools across the nation. Therefore, understanding how teacher professionalism is enacted and the relationship between and amongst the various contexts (i.e. professional culture, professional orientation of the school) is critical when looking at different education reform initiatives. Rather than demand strict and uniform prescriptions for professionalism, how can education reform efforts be more flexible and compromising, so not to attack professionalism, but allow teachers to enact their versions of professionalism according to the best interest of the students? If the goal of education reform is to initiate change, understanding teacher perceptions of professionalism will allow for a better vision of how teachers who are implementing those changes experience change in relation to their professionalism. If, as the findings from ULS suggest, the driver of professionalism is the best interest of the students, how can education reform allow for such diverse attention on the part of the teachers to attend to their students?

Teacher Unions

The findings from this study have both implications for the role of teachers' unions in professionalism, as well as raise some critical questions. Moe (2011) argues that teachers' unions are one of the most influential groups in American public education. Teachers unions emerged onto the scene in the 1960s when states began to develop laws that promoted the collective bargaining of public employees. By the 1980s teachers' unions were well in force, not dissimilar to their force and function today (Moe, 2011). Given the ability of unions to mobilize at the ground level for purposes of collective bargaining, and their ability to insert themselves as a political force, teachers' unions rose to power. Moe (2011) argues that this shift in power in America's education system is consequential given the power of the union to promote its own interests. While teachers' unions may express what is best for the student, Moe (2011) argues that, "As a matter of public relations, they need to say that. But the simple fact – and it is indeed a straightforward fact – is that they are not in the business of representing the interests of children. They are unions. They represent the job-related interests of their members, and these interests are simply not the same as the interests of children" (p. 7). While I would argue that there may be some overlap between the interests of the teachers represented and the best interests of the students, increasingly teachers' unions focus on issues of teacher salary, working conditions, and job benefits over teacher practice and bolstering teacher professionalism. In fact, at times the focus of teachers' unions seems to challenge the nature of teacher professionalism. One teacher at ULS described how she felt the tensions in teachers' union had created some divides, particularly amongst teachers and administration. "It seems that as we move to become more "unionized", the sense of community and family at the school is weakened. In the past, I don't think I ever felt the "us vs. them" sentiment at the school" (P#16, Survey, 2016).

This raises critical questions with regard to the role of teachers' unions in teacher professionalism. Specifically, what role do teachers' unions play in enhancing, or challenging teachers' perceptions of professionalism?

Teacher Education

The findings from this study, in combination with the literature on professionalism, has shown the complex nature of professionalism, the many contexts in which professionalism exists, and the idea that professionalism in teaching is composed of aspects beyond those that are merely required by the job. It becomes, therefore, necessary for the programs, which prepare future teachers to enter the profession, to consider ways in which teacher education programs can better prepare teachers for the multiple contexts of professionalism, as articulated in Figure 3 above. In her discussion on the need for defining professionalism in teacher education programs, Creasy (2015) articulates that the lack of definition for professionalism is problematic for preparing students in be professionals in the field. Creasy (2015) suggests drawing from Domain 4: Professionalism Responsibility from The Framework for Teaching (Danielson, 2013). She concedes that consensus on a definition for professionalism amongst teacher education programs is unlikely to be reached and the framework suggested by Creasy (2015) serves as an evaluative tool for teacher candidates. While the subsets of the domain and indicators for each describe characteristics or behaviors for professionalism, they do not address or prepare teachers for the reality of the multiple contexts for professionalism that exist in practice. Therefore, it raises the question for teacher education programs; how do we prepare teachers to negotiate the contexts of professionalism and the dynamics between enacted and demanded forms of professionalism?

Professional Development

Evans (2008) describes professional development as the "…process whereby people's professionality and/or professionalism may be considered to be enhanced" (p. 30). Within her definition, professional development includes all forms, which may be more individual, or profession-wide. Evans (2008) describes her intentional use of 'may be considered to be' in her definition as the development in question may or may not be viewed as an enhancement. Evans (2008) situates professional development within the context of change. Although professional development is a means of bringing about educational change or reform, (for example, the abundance of professional development workshops and trainings associated with the roll out of the Common Core State Standards), the findings of this study suggest that teachers view professional learning and continuous growth as a part of the profession. While change may occur naturally through that process, the emphasis is on the teacher-initiated growth through whichever mechanism is most meaningful for the teacher or collective group of teachers. According to Fullan (2007), "Most professional development experiences for teachers fail to make an impact" (p. 285). Fullan (2007) argues instead for the creation or space within schools to make a culture for learning. Elmore (2000, as cited in Fullan, 2007), claims, "Experimentation and discovery can be harnessed to social learning by connecting people with new ideas to each other in an environment in which the ideas are subject to scrutiny, measured against the collective purposes of the organization and tested by the history of what has already been learned and is known" (p. 292). Professional development does not need to be in the form of workshops, where an "expert" is brought in to teach teachers about how to best teach their own students, and as one teacher at ULS stated, collect a binder full of "evidence". Professional development is the day-to-day process of continued learning, reflection, experimentation, and innovation, whereby the success of such experimentation and innovation are measured and evaluated within the professional

community. These ideas are consistent with the findings at ULS. Teachers cited the freedom and flexibility, collaboration with colleagues, and the emphasis on research and innovation as contributing factors to both the professional learning and continued growth. Although very few schools have emerged from similar roots in educational research and would describe themselves as a "seedbed for innovation", the emphasis on research and teacher as researcher has distinct implications for the professional learning, or development of all teachers. Research as a form of professional development allows teachers to systematically investigate their own problems of practice, and is evaluated on the basis of the collective purpose and needs of the school. Change is then determined and implemented in ways that are meaningful to all involved in the process of the professional development. Full blown research programs and close ties to a university are not necessary to begin a change in school culture where teachers and professional communities have the space to explore meaningful solutions and implement meaningful change.

Future Work

The findings from ULS present a snapshot of a much larger picture of teacher professionalism in the United States. Although the literature on professionalism suggest that there is no authoritative definition for professionalism, the findings from this study suggest that there may be elements of a definition for professionalism found within the various contexts in which teachers are enacting their versions of professionalism. Through conducting research within particular contexts we can begin to understand how contextual definitions for professionalism interact with, or are influenced by the orientation of the school. We can look for specific structures within school settings and how those are shaped by the professional or bureaucratic orientation of the school. From there, we can explore how professionalism in those contexts compare across other contexts, and in both traditional public school settings as well as

charter schools. However, first more research on teacher perceptions of professionalism in various school settings is needed, such that we can begin to develop contextual definitions for professionalism that can be compared across those various settings. Contextual definitions for teacher professionalism will not only allow for a better understanding of the nature and substance of professionalism, but how it interacts within the multiple contexts in which teacher professionalism is situated.

Concluding Remarks

The nature of teacher professionalism is both ambiguous and complex. The concept of teacher professionalism has shifted meanings over time and in relation to the context surrounding the profession. Existing literature, as well as findings from this study indicate that there is a relationship between both macro-level and micro-level contexts and teacher professionalism. However, while macro-level contexts, such as legislative policy and district level decision making can alter the meaning of professionalism, the new definitions are not given real meaning unless enacted in practice (Evans, 2008). Findings from this study suggest that teachers at the University Laboratory School perceive professionalism in teaching as going beyond the basics required to do one's job, in order to best serve the students. Although teachers perceive professionalism as going beyond the basics, teachers in this study attribute their ability to enact their "beyond the basics" conceptions of professionalism to the administration's support and encouragement, in addition to their colleagues. That is, teachers at ULS articulated the belief that both the faculty and administration have negotiated a shared meaning of teacher professionalism, or have an established, yet evolving professional culture based on mutual trust; trust that the teachers can and will always act in the best interest of the students. This is particularly imperative given the larger educational context where change is evident and occurring rapidly.

Teachers require the flexibility and autonomy to adapt and evolve as the context around them shifts; new technological discoveries, increasingly diverse populations of students with regard to both language and culture, and the knowledge-based economy world into which our students will inevitably embark.

Teachers have an intimate understanding of the complexities of the teaching profession and what professionalism in teaching means. When we constrain schools and teachers' ability to adapt and respond to the needs of students, we limit their ability to enact their conceptions of professionalism, or at the very least we create tension between what teachers are told is professionalism, and what teachers believe is professionalism. Understanding teacher conceptions of professionalism raise questions and concerns about the current bureaucratic structure of the educational system writ large, and the language and ideas surrounding teacher professionalism. If we truly want to enhance teacher professionalism and create equal educational opportunities for all students, then teachers need the autonomy to innovate, collaborate, and adapt to the needs of their own students. Enforcing demanded forms of professionalism, particularly those that limit teacher autonomy and require greater accountability, limits teachers' ability to enact professionalism in a way that is in the best interest of the student, plausibly perpetuating the inequalities that pervade our educational system. We need educational structures that provide opportunities for teachers to enact their perceptions of professionalism, which primarily include going above and beyond the basics, or bare minimum requirements of the profession and increase teachers job satisfaction and motivation (Day, 2002). There is little disagreement amongst teachers in this study with regard to the need for a baseline of standards in teaching with regard to content. However, matters of best practice in teaching and curriculum should be left to the local context and community of teachers. School structures

should be more professionally oriented, with collaborative structures in place for negotiating matters of best practice and curriculum.

Our current system of public education is entrenched in bureaucracy. Decisions are made top-down, with little to no consideration for the impacts of those policies and decisions on the professional lives of teachers, or how the decisions and policies will interact with the teachers' conceptions of professionalism as the policies filter through the school to the teacher, and to the students. Given the more rigid, bureaucratic structures that currently exist in traditional public schools, charter schools provide an alternative and additionally serve as a model for professional structures that can be translated and adapted into traditional public schools. However, given the limited number of charter schools, and the number of students who are not admitted, the hope would be that there is a sunset date on the need for public-charter schools in our education system. Following the charter school approach, traditional public schools would adopt and adapt a more professional orientation where teachers were trusted and supported to innovate, experiment, and collaborate on matters of curriculum and practice. All students would have the opportunity to be at public schools and teachers and the community would have the flexibility to adapt and tailor matters of curriculum and teaching to the needs of the students, providing them with the best education; that is, providing them with the education that they need. As an educational system, we would embrace the diversity that exists in our schools, and provide the supports and freedoms that teachers need to provide all students with the best in public education.

Limitations and Difficulties

The limitations of this study pertain to both the sample size of the study, as well as generalizability. The proposed sample for the study consisted of forty teachers and student

support teachers who regularly work with and instruct students at the school site. Of the forty proposed participants, only twenty-three responded affirmatively to the recruitment for participation, and of that only twenty participants participated in the study (50% of the proposed sample). Generalizations were made about the entire school population based on the sample. The time of year in which the data was collected posed to be problematic. The survey, interviews, and focus group interviews were conducted between March 2016 and June 2016. This time of year is the end of the school year for teachers and is often a busy time with final exams and projects, as well as graduation festivities. This limited the amount of time teachers were available for participation in the study.

The particular school site and context was extremely relevant to this study and its findings. Given that this study revealed the name and details about the school, for the sake of protecting the rights and identity of the teacher participants, specific demographic information about the teacher participants in this study were not revealed despite possible relevance to this study. That is, nuanced sub-trends and patterns that emerged in the findings could not be revealed in the final write up of this study. Therefore, the findings of this study focused on more broad, generalized findings that emerged irrespective of demographic factors.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Survey Instrument

1. Name
2. Gender
3. How many years have you been a classroom teacher?
4. How many years have you been teaching at the University Laboratory School?
5. What grade level(s) do you teach?
6. What subject(s) do you teach?
7. Are there any additional roles you have at the school aside from teaching? If so, please briefly describe that role.
8. Please describe your background, your experience in teaching, and what led you into teaching
9. In your own words, describe the University Laboratory School. Or, what words come to mind that you would use to describe the University Laboratory School? Please provide examples of the specific ways in which you feel the school embodies the words you use to describe it.
10. What does "teacher professionalism" mean to you? Again, what words come to mind? What factors do you think influence your perception of teacher professionalism?
11. Have your perceptions of teacher professionalism changed over time? If they have changed, how? What factors do you think contributed to that change?
12. Do you think your perceptions of teacher professionalism are similar to those of other teachers at ULS? What about teachers not at ULS?
13. Describe an example in your teaching experience, or something you do on a regular basis, that you feel embodies your ideas of teacher professionalism.
14. Is there anything else you would like to share about your thoughts on teacher professionalism? If so, please share in the space below.

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